Shojo Beat Manga

Tail of the Moon

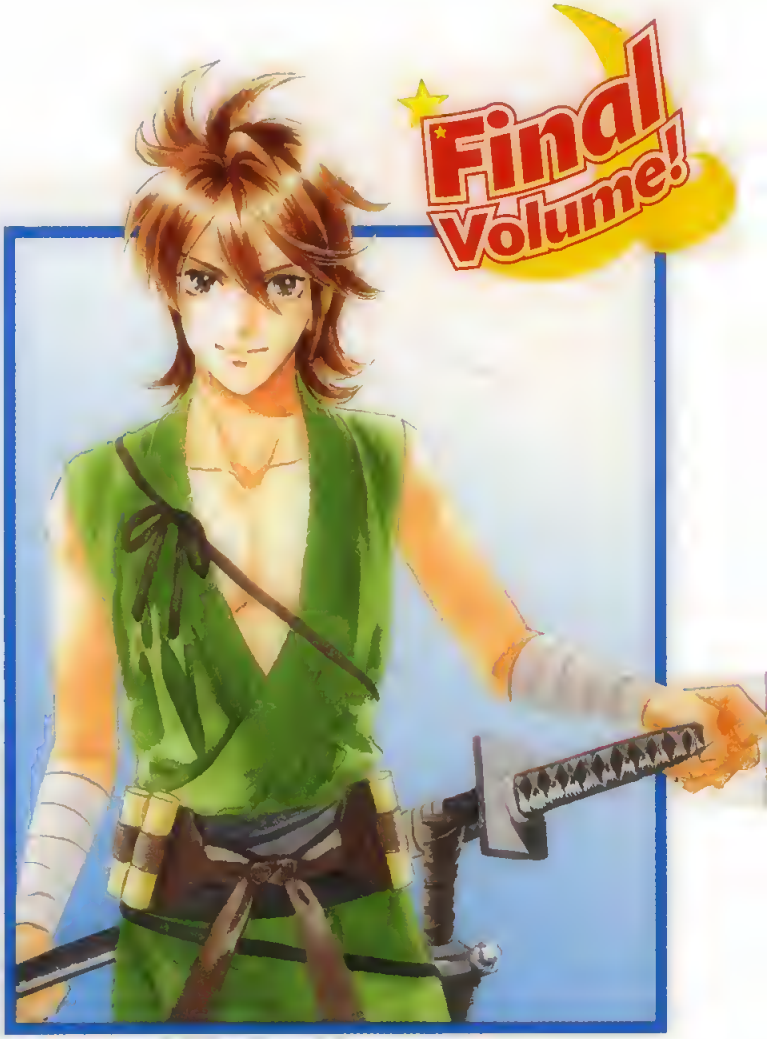
Story & A

Rinko Ueda

5

Usagi is the granddaughter of the leader of a prestigious ninja village, but she's such a klutz that she's never made it out of the kiddie class. Frustrated with Usagi's lack of progress, her great-grandfather sends her to marry Lord Hanzo and have lots of ninja babies. But the lord has no interest in her or her childbearing potential!

Hanzo continues to plot Oda Nobunaga's assassination, and an angry Mitsuhide decides to betray his own lord. During Mitsuhide's attack on Nobunaga, Usagi gets caught in the middle! With everyone's lives in jeopardy, how will this thrilling ninja tale end?



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Story & Art by

Rinko Ueda

Shojo Beat

Tail of the Moon

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Tail of the Moon

Chapter 99

Tail of the Moon

Volume 15

CONTENTS

Chapter 99 3

Chapter 100 29

Chapter 101 57

Chapter 102 83

Final Chapter 109

Promise of the Moon: Part1 141

Promise of the Moon: Part2 181

Glossary 222

Story Thus Far...

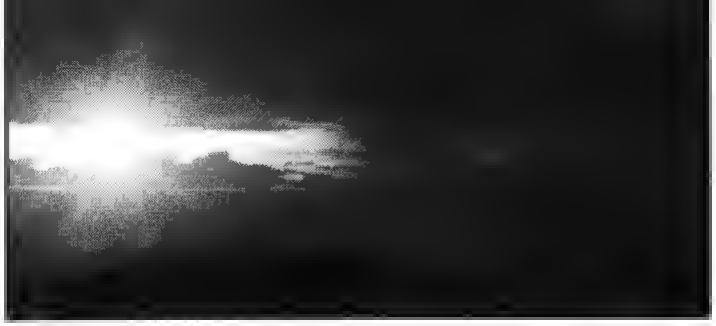
It is the Era of the Warring States. Usagi is working as an herbalist under Tokugawa Ieyasu at Okazaki Castle. She goes to Iga with her friend Yukimaru to investigate a rumor and is reunited with her great-grandpa, grandpa, and Goemon.

Usagi decides to marry Yukimaru, but Yukimaru calls the wedding off once he realizes Usagi's true feelings. Yukimaru tells Usagi he has seen someone who looks like her old love Hanzo, so she heads over to Azuchi Castle to see for herself.

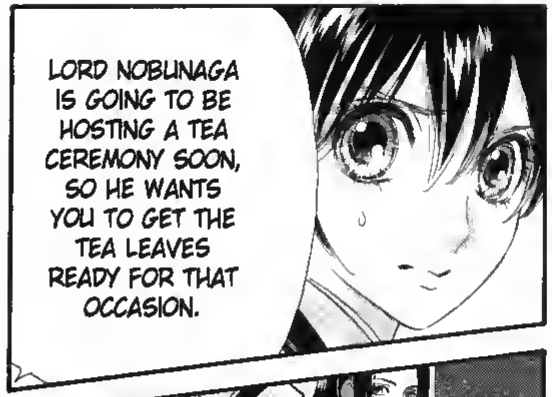
Usagi catches Oda Nobunaga's attention and ends up working for him at Azuchi Castle. She is reunited with Hanzo, but Hanzo is bent on getting revenge on Nobunaga and leaves Usagi again. Usagi tries to assassinate Nobunaga herself, but she finds herself unable to do it. After being moved by disgraced Mitsuhide's magnanimous attitude, she decides to stop Hanzo from getting his revenge, but...?!

THERE'S ONE MORE THING, MITSUHIDE...
NO MATTER WHAT YOU SAY, HE'S NOT GOING TO TAKE BACK HIS DECREE.
YOU'VE ALSO BEEN ASKED TO GO BACKUP HIDEYOSHI HASHIBA— HE'S HAVING SOME DIFFICULTY ATTACKING THE MOURI CLAN.

"THE LANDS OF OMI AND TANBA WHICH MITSUHIDE CURRENTLY HOLDS WILL BE TAKEN, AND HIS NEW DOMAIN WILL BE IZUMO OF THE SANIN AREA."
MOVE ASIDE !!
I'M GOING TO LORD NOBUNAGA TO PROTEST THIS...
IT'S NO USE.
DASH



SAKAMOTO CASTLE


LORD NOBUNAGA IS GOING TO BE HOSTING A TEA CEREMONY SOON, SO HE WANTS YOU TO GET THE TEA LEAVES READY FOR THAT OCCASION.

YES...
I HAVE ORDERS FOR YOU TOO, USAGI.

STAGGER...

TMP
TMP
MITSUHIDE...

...SO CALLOUSLY ...?
HOW COULD HE TAKE AWAY MITSU-HIDE'S LAND...

I'M SO SORRY!!
LORD NOBUNAGA ...
...HAS DEPRIVED ME OF MY DOMAIN...
DE... PRIVED ...?
SWAY
HIROKO !!
HIROKO !!

IT'S NOT LIKE YOU TO COME BACK THIS EARLY IN THE MORNING...
MY LORD!
MY LORD ...?
I'M SORRY !!
COULD IT BE... ...THAT YOU DID NOT SUCCEED ...?

I'M WORRIED MORE ABOUT YOU, FATHER...
YOU KNOW ABOUT IT THEN...?
I'LL BE FINE.
YOU SHOULD GO BACK TO TADAOKI, YOUR HUSBAND.
BUT...
THE BEAUTY OF LAKE BIWA WON'T CHANGE...
...WHETHER IT'S SEEN FROM INSIDE THE CASTLE OR OUTSIDE.
I'LL BE ABLE TO OVERCOME ANYTHING AS LONG AS HIROKO AND I ARE TOGETHER.
DON'T WORRY...

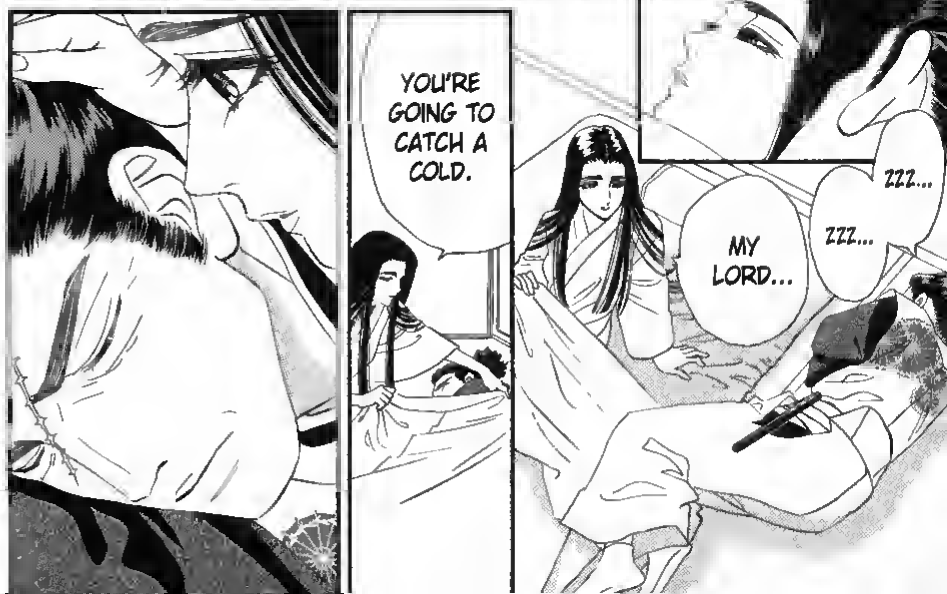
HOW IS SHE DOING ...?!
MOTHER...
SHE'S ASLEEP NOW.
THE HERBALIST SAID ALL SHE NEEDS IS SOME REST...
TMP
TMP
PHEW
HIROKO...
...LIKED THE VIEW OF LAKE BIWA FROM HERE...

THIS CASTLE ...
I WILL PROTECT IT FOR YOU.
HIROKO? ...
SHHK
HIROKO?

I SHOULD GET SOME REST...
OH NO.
TMP
TMP
...

NOD

ZZZ...


YOU'RE GOING TO CATCH A COLD.
MY LORD...
ZZZ...
ZZZ...

WHAT DID YOU WRITE?!
HIROKO...
"MY LORD—"
I CAN'T READ IT...
HUFF...
HUFF...
"PLEASE ASK LORD NOBUNAGA..."
HIROKO...
"...TO RECONSIDER HIS DECISION WITH MY LIFE AS FORFEIT."
"I WILL ALWAYS..."
"...BE WITH YOU..."

HIROKO!!
...
SHUF
HIROKO ?!

WHAT?!
YOU NEED TO HEAD OVER TO SAKAI RIGHT AWAY!
IEYASU HAS FALLEN ILL IN SAKAI...
WH...
WHAT DO YOU WANT?!
TUP
YOU NEEDN'T BE SCARED.
WE'RE NOT ENEMIES ANY-MORE.
WATARI.
HERBAL-IST...
GRAB
MY BAG, MY BAG ...
CLOMP
CLOMP
AAAAH... OH, NO ...!!
LORD IEYASU ...?!
WHISPER
WHISPER
WHAT?
...WATARI?
YOU GOT THAT...
DAD...!!

THE NEXT DAY
AZUCHI
THE TEA IS READY ...!!
IT DIDN'T TAKE AS LONG AS I THOUGHT BECAUSE YOU HELPED ME, WATARI.
THANKS.
HEH HEH...
ZWAK
I'M GOING TO HAND IT OVER TO LORD NOBUNAGA AND ASK HIM TO FORGIVE MITSUHIDE.
HEY.
YOU...!!
DAD!!
LONG TIME NO SEE...
...HERB-ALIST.

YOU CAN'T!
YES, SIR.
THEN GO STRAIGHT TO HONNOJI!!
YES...
OH!
LORD NOBUNAGA AND THE OTHERS PROBABLY ALREADY LEFT FOR HONNOJI.
YOU CAN'T GO TO HONNOJI!!
WATARI...?
...BUT DAD SAID NOT TO GO NEAR HONNOJI 'CAUSE IT'S DANGEROUS.
I DON'T KNOW THE DE-TAILS...
AAAGH...
I CAN'T...?
SPIT IT OUT, NOW.

LORD IEYASU!
I CAME TO HELP YOU—
ZWAK
THE NEXT DAY
SAKAI
IEYASU'S LODGINGS
I HEARD LORD IEYASU HAD BECOME ILL...
HUH?
HELP HIM WITH WHAT?!
USAGI ?!
I WAS IN A HURRY, SO...
DID YOU COME HERE WITHOUT TELLING ANYONE ABOUT IT?!
YOU SHOULD GO BACK TO AZUCHI BEFORE YOU GET IN TROUBLE!!
HEY, HE'S GONE!!
A KOUGA NINJA...
WHO TOLD YOU THAT?!

DASH
WHAT ?!
USAGI...
I HAVE TO STOP HIM!!
KEE?
STOP HANZO ?!
I HAVE TO SAVE HIM!!
IT'S HANZO.
HE'S GOING TO GET HIS REVENGE AT HONNOJI...!!

DOES THAT MEAN THAT SOMETHING IS GOING TO HAPPEN AT HONNOJI...?!
DANGEROUS...?
YOU BROUGHT MOSUKE WITH YOU TOO?!
I CAN'T PLAY WITH YOU RIGHT NOW.
I'M SORRY.
KEE...
KEE...
"HANZO DOESN'T WANT TO INVOLVE YOU IN HIS REVENGE AGAINST THE ODA CLAN."

I'M A FAILURE AS A LORD TO HAVE MADE MY MEN CRY.
OF COURSE NOT.
WE ARE ALL WILLING TO FOLLOW YOU TO THE EDGE OF HELL IF WE MUST!!
ZUFF
ZUFF
ZUFF
THE EDGE OF HELL...
AGH.

NGH...
ZUFF
ZUFF

MY LORD...
YOUR EYES CAN HARDLY SEE ANYMORE...

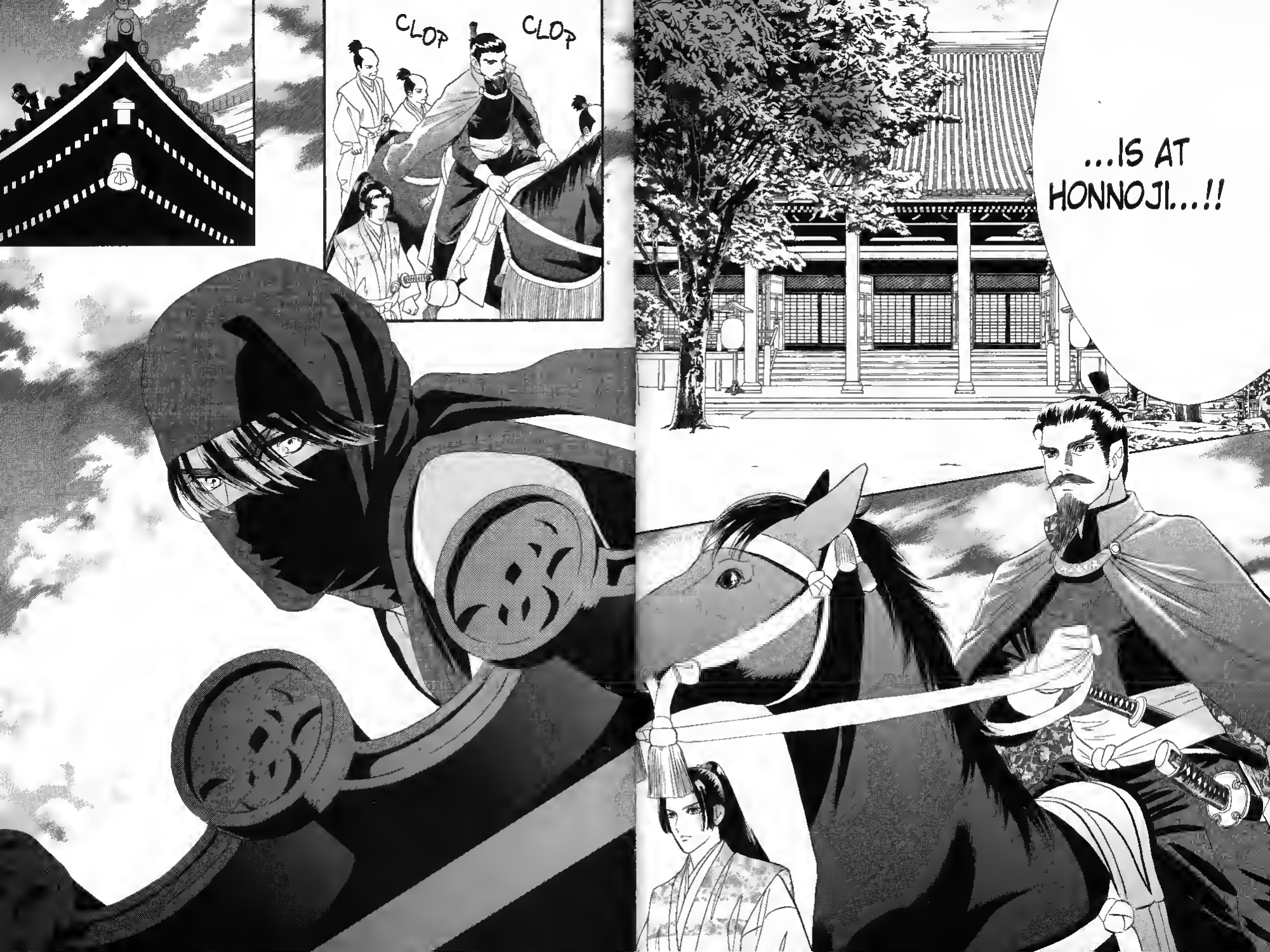
NOT AT ALL.
I CAN STILL SEE CLEARLY...
...WITH THE EYES...
...OF MY MIND...

ZUFF
ZUFF
THE NEXT DAY
KAMEYAMA
LET'S GO...
SNIFF...
UNGH...
TOSHIMITSU?

MITSUHIDE'S VASSAL TOSHIMITSU SAITO
MY LORD... I FEEL SO BAD FOR YOU...

OUR TRUE ENEMY...
MY LORD...?
...IS NOT THE MOURI CLAN...
OUR ENEMY...

...TELL ME WHO THE REAL ENEMY IS.
THESE EYES...


CLOP
CLOP
...IS AT HONNOJI...!!

Tail of the Moon

Chapter 100

LET'S GO!

LITTLE HANZO

NERVOUS BREAKDOWN
SHE'S SO LOUD ...
SHE STINKS ...
WAARGH WAARGH
HANZO WAS ON THE VERGE OF A BREAKDOWN FROM BEING WITH USAGI, WHO CONTINUED TO BE DIRTY AND NOISY...
...HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE...
I...
WAARGH WAARGH
I THOUGHT THE PROMISE WAS TO TAKE CARE OF HER UNTIL YOU NO LONGER DISLIKED WOMEN...
MASTER TANBA, I'VE COME TO RETURN THE BABY.
HANZO MASTERED THE ABILITY TO LIE!!
I NO LONGER DISLIKE WOMEN!
WAARGH WAARGH

I'M COMING FOR YOU.
ZUFF
ZUFF
I'M COMING TO HELP YOU, HANZO!!
"MY HEART DIED WHEN IGA WAS DESTROYED."
DON'T THINK LIKE THAT!!

I'M SO GLAD...
...I MADE IT...
HUFF HUFF
USAGI ?!
LORD NOBUNAGA!
HA HA.
TO SEE LORD IEYASU...
AND WHERE DID YOU GO OFF TO?!
WHAT IS WITH YOUR CLOTHES ?
WHAT ...?!
THAT IDIOT...
TWITCH
SHA

TMP
TMP
HONNOJI
TMP
TMP

DON'T YOU NEED MORE GUARDS AROUND THIS PLACE?
MOST OF MY MEN ARE OUT IN BATTLE RIGHT NOW.
WE'RE AT THE CAPITAL, SO WE SHOULDN'T NEED TOO MANY GUARDS.

I SEE...

HANZO...
...WILL NEVER LET THIS OPPORTUNITY PASS BY!!

BUT THIS PLACE IS SO UN-GUARDED.

HMPH.
YES.
I'M YOUR ONLY MASTER.
THAT'S WHY I'M HERE TO PROTECT YOU!
DON'T TAKE ACTIONS BASED ON YOUR OWN WHIM!
PROTECT HIM, MY FOOT.
HUMPH
YOU'RE JUST AN EX-NINJA.

TMP
TMP
YES, SIR...
YOU'RE TO HELP WITH THE TEA CEREMONY TOMORROW.

IT'S THE TAIL OF THE MOON.
TAIL...?
IT'S A SIGN OF GOOD LUCK IF YOU SEE THE TAIL OF THE MOON.
REALLY ...?

I CAN'T RELAX UNTIL THE TEA CEREMONY'S OVER...

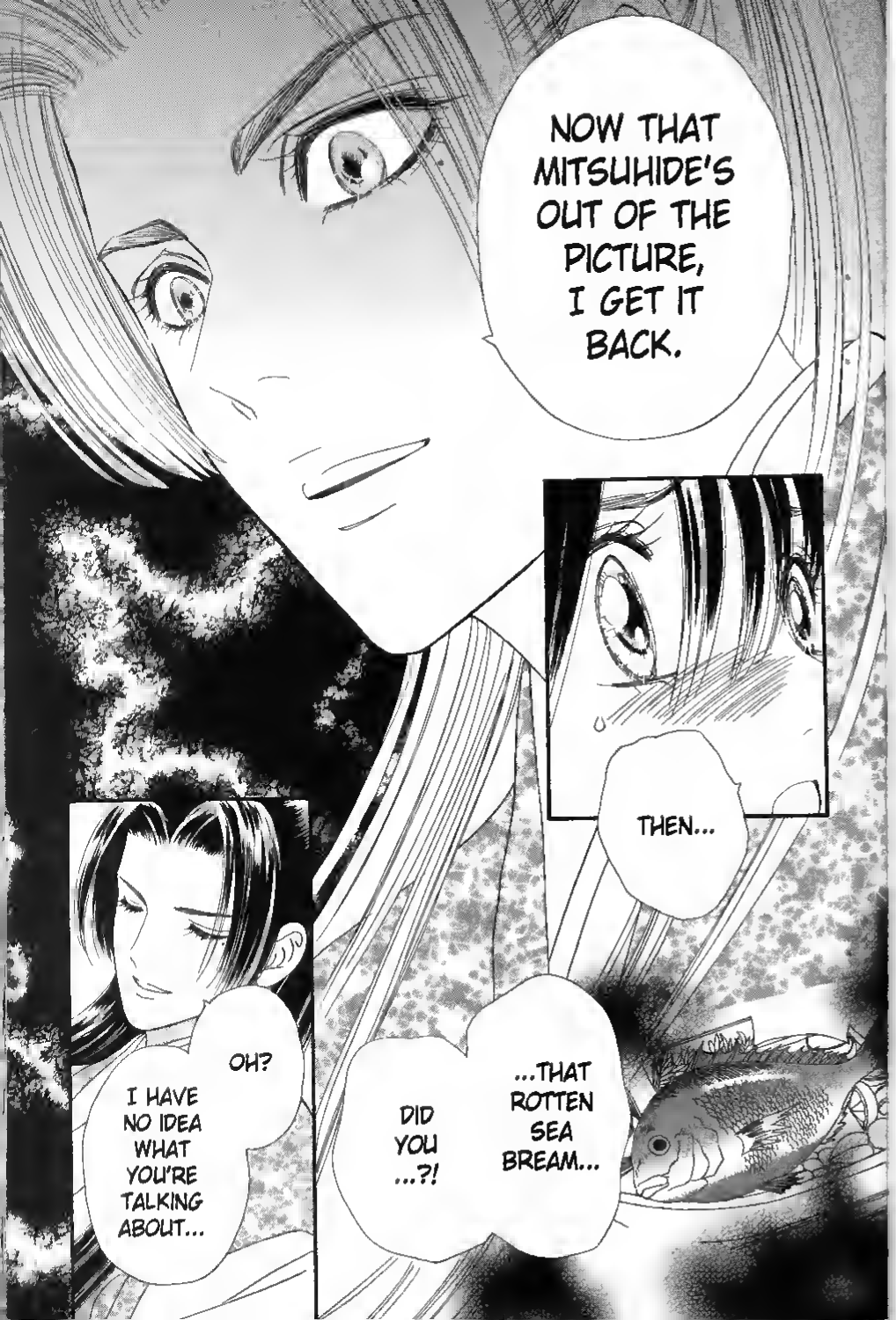
YEEAGH!
THUMP
HEY!

BOW
I'M SORRY.
THERE'S NO NEED FOR YOU TO DO THAT.
AH.
HM?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING THIS LATE AT NIGHT?
I...
I WAS MAKING MY ROUNDS ...
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP

YOU HAVE TO FORGIVE HIM!!
"LORD NOBUNAGA DEPENDS ON ME."
LORD NOBUNAGA ...
IT IS OF NO CONCERN TO YOU.
I COULDN'T BE OF ANY HELP...
PLEASE DON'T SAY UNNECESSARY THINGS TO HIM.
I'M SORRY, MITSUHIDE...

THERE'S NO OTHER PERSON WHO CARES FOR YOU AS MUCH AS HE DOES!!
LORD NOBUNAGA ...
CAN'T YOU...
...FORGIVE MITSUHIDE...?


NOW THAT MITSUHIDE'S OUT OF THE PICTURE, I GET IT BACK.
THEN...
...THAT ROTTEN SEA BREAM...
DID YOU ...?!
OH? I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT...

TUG
WHAT...?
SHFF
IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS, RANMARU!
SHFF
SAKAMOTO CASTLE...
...WAS BUILT BY MY LATE FATHER.

!!
NO...
DMP
DMP
DMP DMP
DMP DMP
WHAT IS THAT...?!
DMP DMP DMP DMP DMP

WHAM
STOP TRYING TO SOUND INNOCENT!!
HOW COULD YOU DO THAT...?
AGH!
I'M WILLING TO DO ANY-THING...
...TO GET THE THINGS I WANT.

CLOP
CLOP
HOW CAN THE ENEMY SUDDENLY APPEAR IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CAPITAL...?
ZUFF ZUFF
ZUFF ZUFF
THAT'S...!!
NIGHT RAID ?!
THEN IT'S NOT HANZO?!
GATHER AROUND!
GET YOUR WEAPONS!

ZWAK
WHAT IS ALL THAT COMMOTION OUTSIDE...?
MY LORD!!
DMP DMP DMP DMP DMP DMP
IT'S A NIGHT RAID!

NEEAARGH
WHUMP
WHUMP
MY LORD...
YOU MUST ESCAPE ...
HEH.
SO MITSUHIDE ...
...WAS HUMAN TOO, AFTER ALL...

THE CREST OF A BELL-FLOWER...!!
MITSUHIDE ?!
ATTACK ...!!

...WHERE I MUST GET MY REVENGE WITH MY OWN HANDS...
THIS IS ONE BATTLE...
THEN...
...I, TOSHI-MITSU...
...WILL BE YOUR EYES...!!

RAN-MARU.
GET YOUR BOW AND ARROW!!
DOON
DOON
GOOD.
FOLLOW ME!
THE GATES ARE OPEN!!
MY LORD...
YOU CANNOT FIGHT WITH THOSE EYES!!
KRAK

KLANG
...
VISH
GET INSIDE!
HURRY!!
AAAAH!
SHNK
DON'T LET THEM ESCAPE!!
URGH!
VISH
VISH

AAAGH
SHK
SHK
AAAH!
WHY...?
WHY WOULD MITSUHIDE DO THIS ...?
USAGI!!

SHINK
FWISH
LOOK OU—

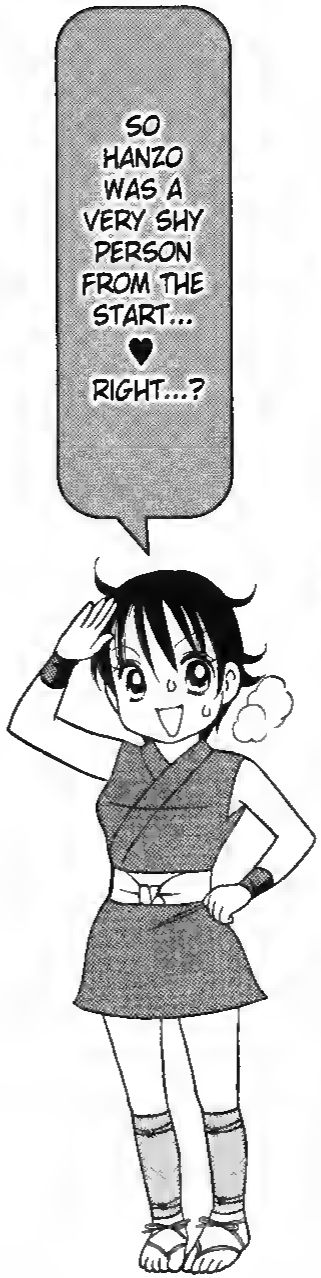
KRSHAAA
RANMARU ...!!
...
AH...

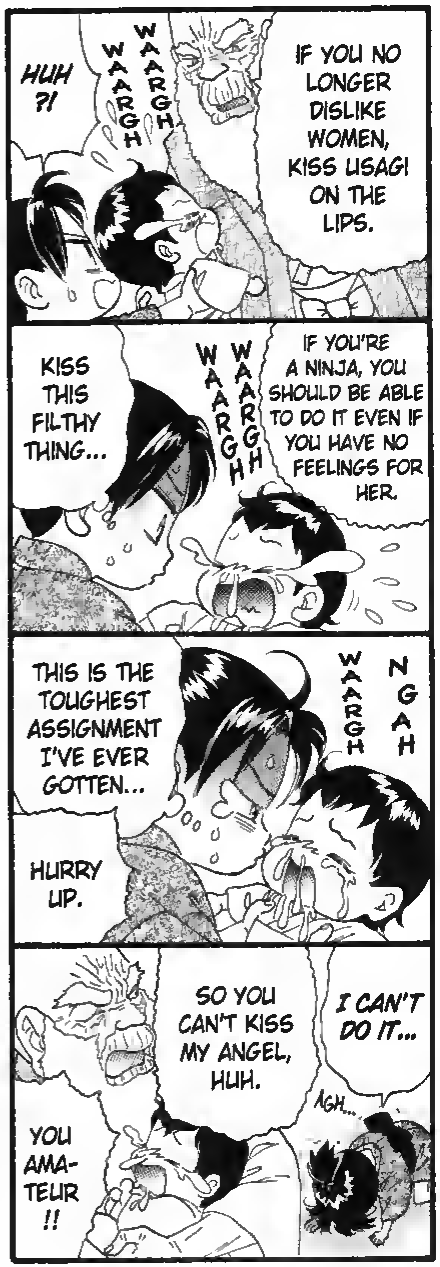
Tail of the Moon

Chapter 101

LET'S GO!

LITTLE HANZO




HUH ?!
WAARGH WAARGH
IF YOU NO LONGER DISLIKE WOMEN, KISS USAGI ON THE LIPS.
KISS THIS FILTHY THING...
WAARGH WAARGH
IF YOU'RE A NINJA, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO IT EVEN IF YOU HAVE NO FEELINGS FOR HER.
THIS IS THE TOUGHEST ASSIGNMENT I'VE EVER GOTTEN...
HURRY UP.
WAARGH
NGAH
SO YOU CAN'T KISS MY ANGEL, HUH.
I CAN'T DO IT...
AGH...
YOU AMA-TEUR !!

TMP
RANMARU !!
SHUU
VIS
H
UGAH!
RANMARU !!
SLU
MP
I WANTED...
...TO DO SOME-THING...
...FOR YOU...
...AT LEAST ...ONCE...
WHY...?!
STAGGER
URGH...

RAN... MARU...?
RAN- MARU !!
RAN- MARU !!
WHY ?
RAN- MARU ...!!

SLIP
FUMP
AAH!
HANG IN THERE...
DRAG
DRAG
... I... I CAN'T SEE...
I'M SORRY...

WE CAN ESCAPE FROM THERE!!
THERE'S A SECRET ESCAPE PASSAGE IN THE BACK!
NGH.
SNIFF...

WHO'S THERE?!

HURRY UP AND GET OUT OF HERE...

NGAAH...

COUGH
WAAAGH
WHAT ARE YOU DOING ?!

AAAAH!
WHY DOES HE HAVE TO DIE?!

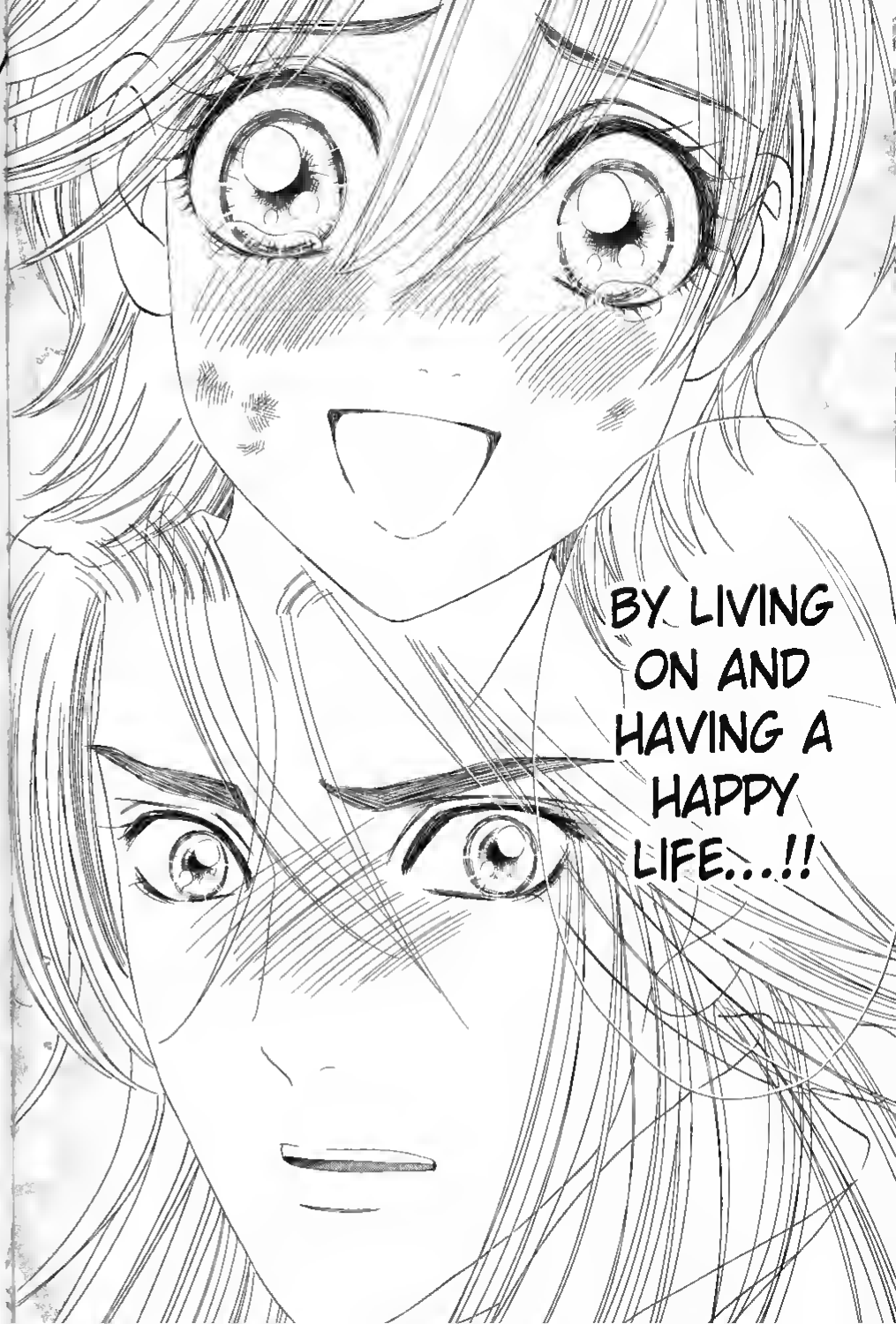
TUG
THIS PLACE IS GOING TO FALL!!
LEAVE HIM!!

I WILL HAVE MY REVENGE...
...FOR THE ATTACK ON IGA...!!
PREPARE TO DIE ...!!
TMP TMP TMP TMP
HANZO!!

ARE YOU SAYING...
...THAT YOUR RETALIATION WILL END ONCE YOU KILL THE ONE YOU HATE?!
ARE YOU GOING TO FEEL BETTER AFTER THAT?!
I'M GOING TO GET MY REVENGE IN ANOTHER WAY!!
A...
...NOTHER WAY...?

NO!
HE'S THE ONE WHO ROBBED US OF OUR HOME AND KILLED OUR FRIENDS!!
WHY DO YOU STOP ME?!

WHAT...
THAT'S TRUE...
I'D NEVER BE ABLE TO DEFEAT A CAREFREE PERSON...
KRSHA
BOOSH
WATCH OUT...!
KLANG
KLANG
I'M FINE...
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, LORD NOBUNAGA ?!


BY LIVING ON AND HAVING A HAPPY LIFE...!!

HAAAGH!
BOMARU!
TMP TMP TMP TMP
YOU TRAITOR ...!!
I WILL NOT LET YOU INTERFERE WITH MY LORD'S REVENGE!!
RAAAGH!
KSHA
BOMARU !!
TOSHI-MITSU ?!
WHUMP
!!
...
URGH...

MITSUHIDE !!
KLANG
KLANG
MY LORD!!
WE'VE FOUND NOBUNAGA !!
ARE YOU THERE TOO, USAGI?
SHUP
...THAT SHOW ME THE TRUTH!
I HAVE EYES...
HAS HE GONE BLIND?!
MITSU-HIDE...
YOUR EYES ...!!
CAN YOU KILL ME WITH THOSE EYES?
HA...

WHAT AN ACT OF FOLLY...
I WILL HAVE MY REVENGE...
...EVEN IF I AM TO DIE HERE WITH YOU!!
MITSUHIDE, DON'T...!!
STAND ASIDE, OR YOU'LL BE HURT.
GRAB
AAH...

I WILL NOT LET TOSHI-MITSU'S LIFE...
...END IN VAIN...
WHY, MITSUHIDE ?!
HIROKO DIED...
YOUR WIFE ?!
SHE TOOK HER OWN LIFE...
...TO ATONE FOR MY DISGRACE.
I...
...LEARNED ABOUT FORGIVING OTHERS FROM YOU, SO WHY...?

SINCE YOU CANNOT SEE, MITSUHIDE...
...I WILL KILL NOBUNAGA FOR YOU.
HANZO...
DASH
HANZO...
DON'T...

I HAVE...
...KILLED NOBUNAGA WITH MY VERY HANDS.
FWUMP
THANK YOU...
BUT...
...EVEN THOUGH I GOT MY REVENGE...
...HIRO-KO...
...WILL NOT COME BACK...
MITSU-HIDE...
FARE-WELL.
YOU TWO SHOULD LEAVE THIS PLACE AS WELL!!
KLANG

SLASH

HANZO...?!
I NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D BE THE ONE TEACHING ME, USAGI...

LET'S GO, USAGI.
NO.
I TOLD YOU NOT TO DO IT!!
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU, HANZO.

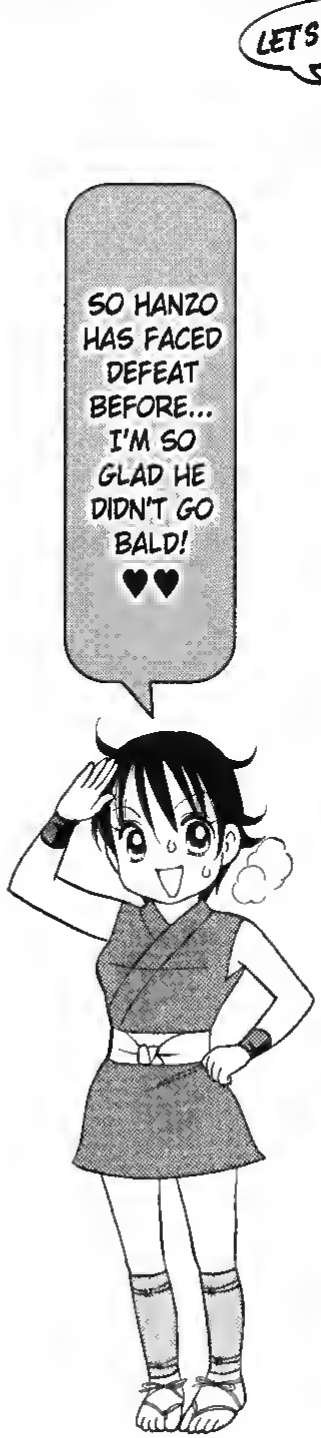
KLANG
MITSU-HIDE...
KLANG

I TOLD YOU TO GIVE UP YOUR VENGEANCE...
HE...
...DIDN'T KILL ME...
HE JUST PRETENDED TO DO IT...

IT HAS BEEN AN INTERESTING LIFE.
LORD NOBUNAGA ?!
KRSHAAAA
LORD NOBUNAGA !!

THIS PLACE WILL FALL ANY MINUTE.
HANZO ...!!
LET'S TAKE THE ESCAPE PASSAGE!!
I WILL CHOOSE MY OWN DESTINY.
LORD NOBUNAGA ...?
RIGHT!!
LORD NOBUNAGA, COME WITH US.

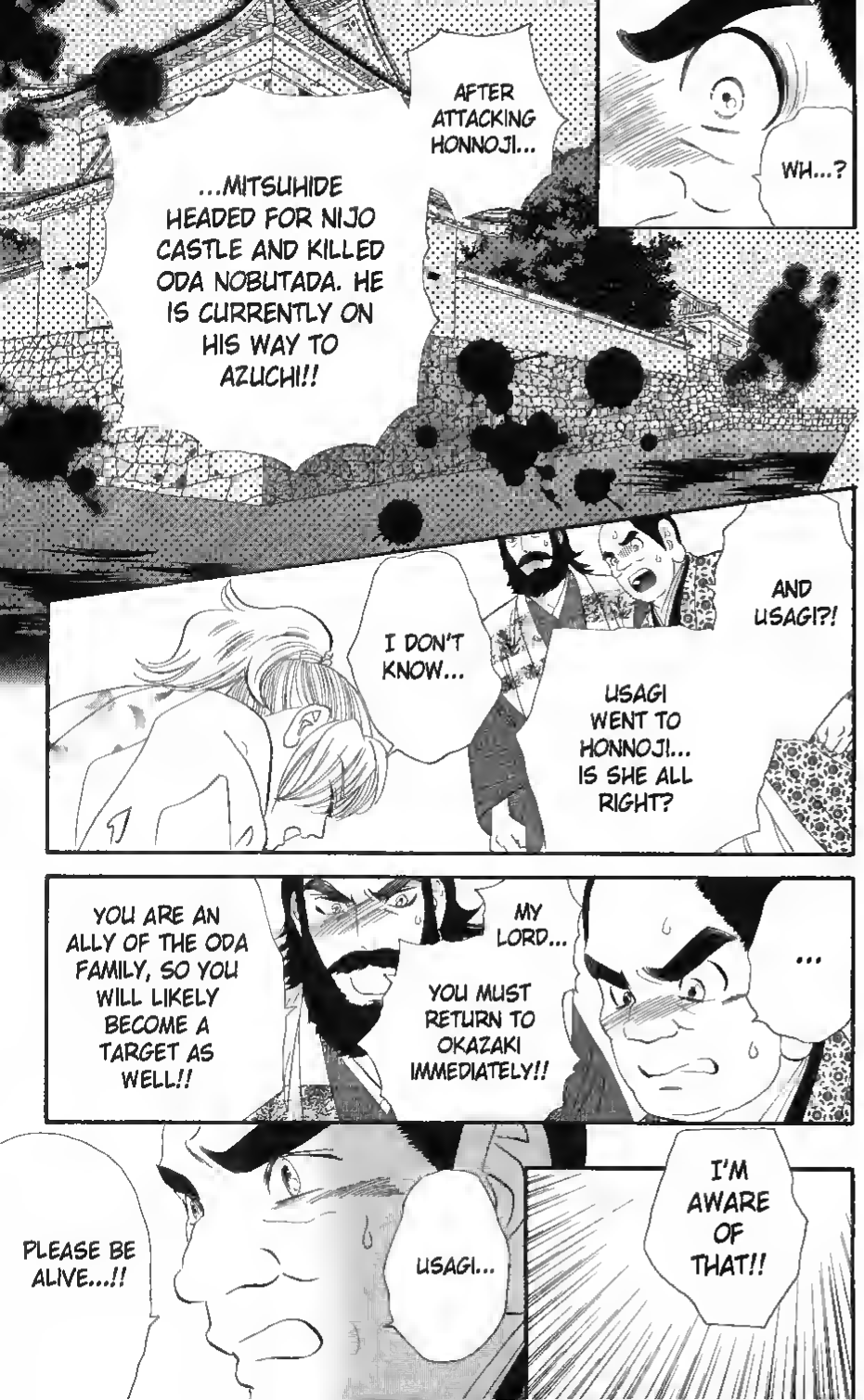
LORD IEYASU...
SAKAI
I HAVE NEWS FOR YOU!
Tail of the Moon
Chapter 102
HANZO'S TRIVIA
THE NAME FOR THE PICKLED GINGER (BENI) THAT IS SERVED WITH SUSHI COMES FROM THE CRUNCHY SOUND YOU MAKE WHEN YOU EAT IT.

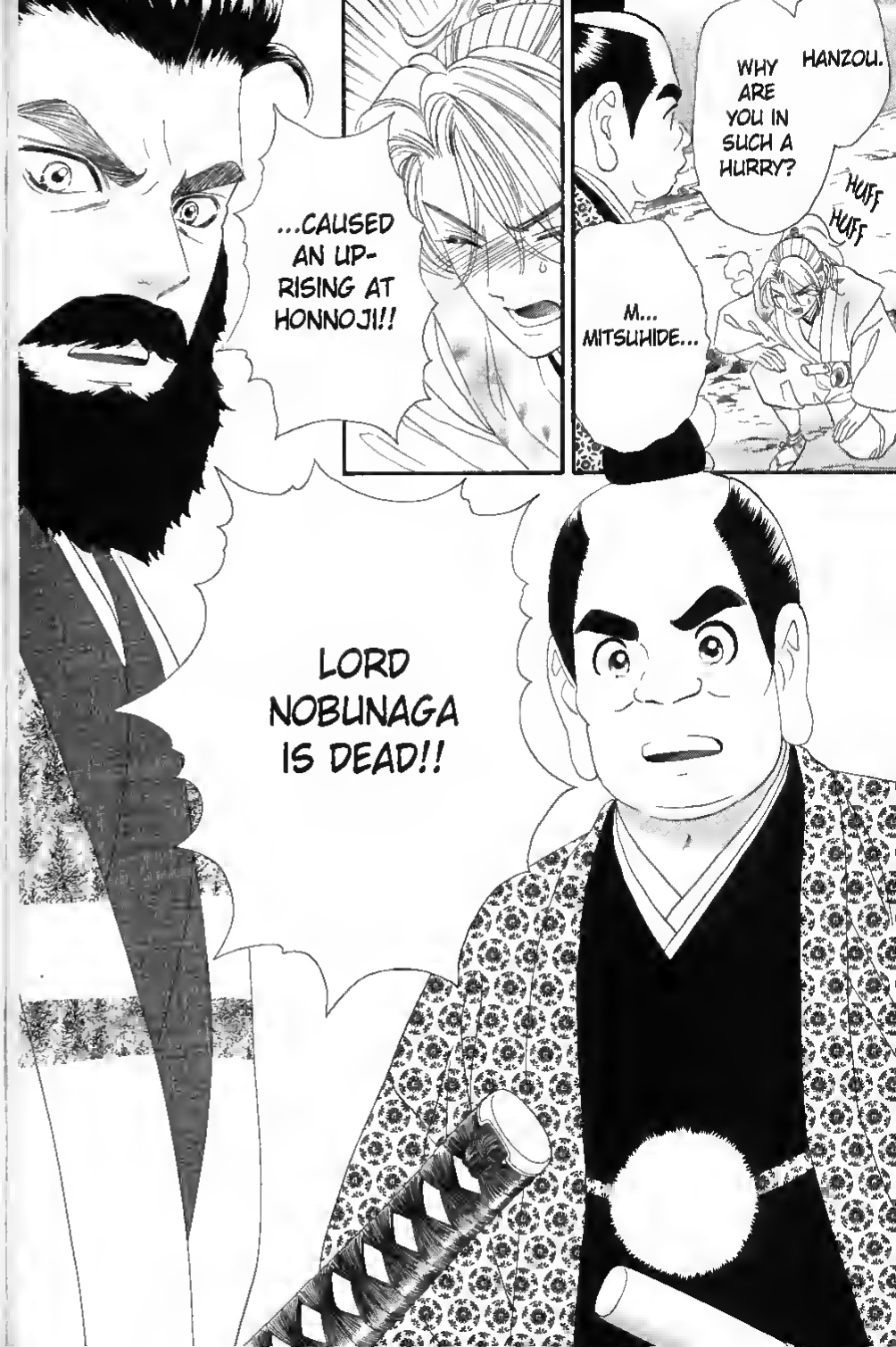


LET'S GO!

LITTLE HANZO

SNIFF
THERE, THERE. DON'T CRY.
HANZO LOST...
I'LL HAVE GOEMON TAKE CARE OF YOU, USAGI.
SNIFF.
NGH.
THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME HANZO HAD EVER LOST.
NGHH...
HE STRIVED SO HARD THAT ANYONE ELSE WOULD'VE GONE BALD...
HYAH!
MMYAH !!
HE CHANNELED THIS FRUSTRATION AND STRIVED EVEN HARDER IN HIS TRAINING...
YET...
Hanzo, you're so cool.
I WILL NOT GO BALD.


...MITSUHIDE HEADED FOR NIJO CASTLE AND KILLED ODA NOBUTADA. HE IS CURRENTLY ON HIS WAY TO AZUCHI!!
AFTER ATTACKING HONNOJI...
WH...?
I DON'T KNOW...
AND USAGI?!
USAGI WENT TO HONNOJI... IS SHE ALL RIGHT?
YOU ARE AN ALLY OF THE ODA FAMILY, SO YOU WILL LIKELY BECOME A TARGET AS WELL!!
MY LORD...
YOU MUST RETURN TO OKAZAKI IMMEDIATELY!!
...
PLEASE BE ALIVE...!!
USAGI...
I'M AWARE OF THAT!!


...CAUSED AN UP-RISING AT HONNOJI!!
HANZOU.
WHY ARE YOU IN SUCH A HURRY?
HUFF HUFF
M... MITSUHIDE...
LORD NOBUNAGA IS DEAD!!

I DON'T WANT YOU TO DIE!!
USAGI?!
MITSUHIDE !!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE...?
DIE...?
YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT ENDING YOUR LIFE AFTER THIS BATTLE, AREN'T YOU?
MITSUHIDE...

KRSHAAA
AZUCHI CASTLE
MITSUHIDE!
USAGI!
DON'T GO ANY FARTHER. IT'S DANGER-OUS!
yEEARGH

MITSU-HIDE...
I HAVE NOTHING LEFT TO SAY!
LEAVE AT ONCE!!
YOU'VE DONE ENOUGH.
MITSU-HIDE...
DMP
DMP
DMP
DMP
YOU'VE DONE EVERYTHING YOU CAN, USAGI.

NOBODY WANTS YOU TO DO THAT!!
...!
YOU'RE GOING TO KILL YOUR-SELF...
I WANT YOU TO STAY ALIVE!!
...TO FOLLOW YOUR WIFE, RIGHT?!

USAGI ?!
USAGI !!
USAGI...

HUFF...
HUFF...
FMP
AAAH...
PANT...
GASP...
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

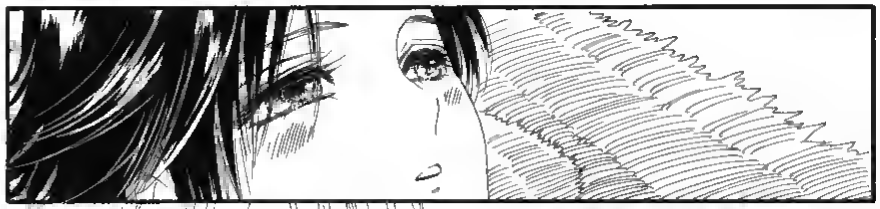
I WONDER IF IT'S STILL THERE IN IGA...?
I WONDER IF IT'S STILL GROWING...
...NEXT TO HANZO'S TREE...
USAGI...
USAGI!!

THAT'S...
...MY TREE...
THAT'S THE SEEDLING THAT WE PLANTED TOGETHER.

BECAUSE OF MY INCOMPETENCE, WE LOST OUR LAND AND OUR HOME...
I'M SORRY...
WHAT...?
MY HOME IS WHERE YOU ARE.
I STILL HAVE MY HOME...

WE'RE NOT TOO FAR FROM AZUCHI...
WHERE... AM I...?
...

YOUR FEVER..
...SEEMS TO HAVE GONE.



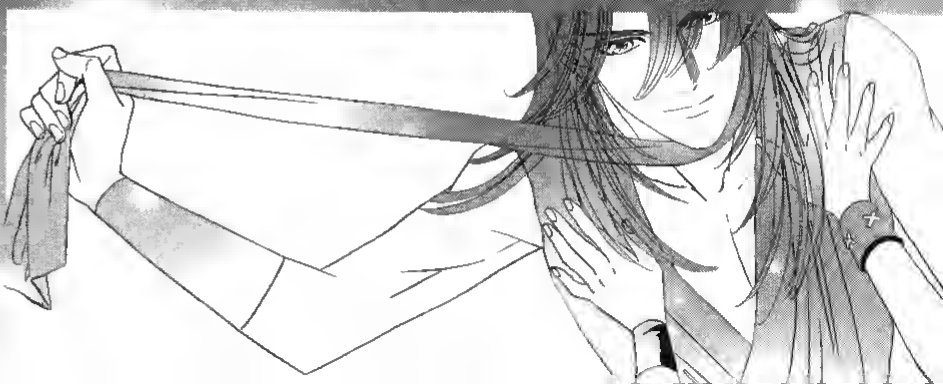
I HAD A DREAM...
A DREAM ABOUT MY TREE...
...THE ONE WE PLANTED IN IGA...
THAT TREE...
I WONDER IF IT'S STILL STANDING THERE...

"HOME IS WHERE I AM, USAGI."
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO TOLD ME THAT, HANZO.
I'M FINALLY BACK.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
I'M FINALLY HOME...

I'M SO GLAD I FELL IN LOVE WITH HANZO.

I LOST SIGHT OF THINGS SO MANY TIMES...

...BUT I'M GLAD I NEVER GAVE UP.



KLANK
KLANK
KLANK
SHA
...?

KLANK
KLANK
A SOLDIER ?!

KLANK
KREEK
KLANK

NN...
HANZO...?

THEY'VE BEGUN HUNTING MITSUHIDE DOWN.
WE NEED TO LEAVE AT ONCE.
WHAT?!

WE'VE DONE EVERYTHING WE CAN...
ISN'T THERE ANY WAY FOR US TO HELP MITSUHIDE?
HAN-ZO...

VISH
VISH
ZUFF
!!
HANZOU!
TAKE CARE OF LORD IEYASU!!
KANG
KANG

DMP
DMP
DMP
DMP
AAAAGH!
HEY, THIS ISN'T FAIR. FIGHT ME ONE AT A TIME!!

H...
HANZOU...

HEEZE
HEEZE
AREN'T WE BACK IN OKAZAKI YET...?
WE'VE JUST ENTERED THE YAMATO REGION.

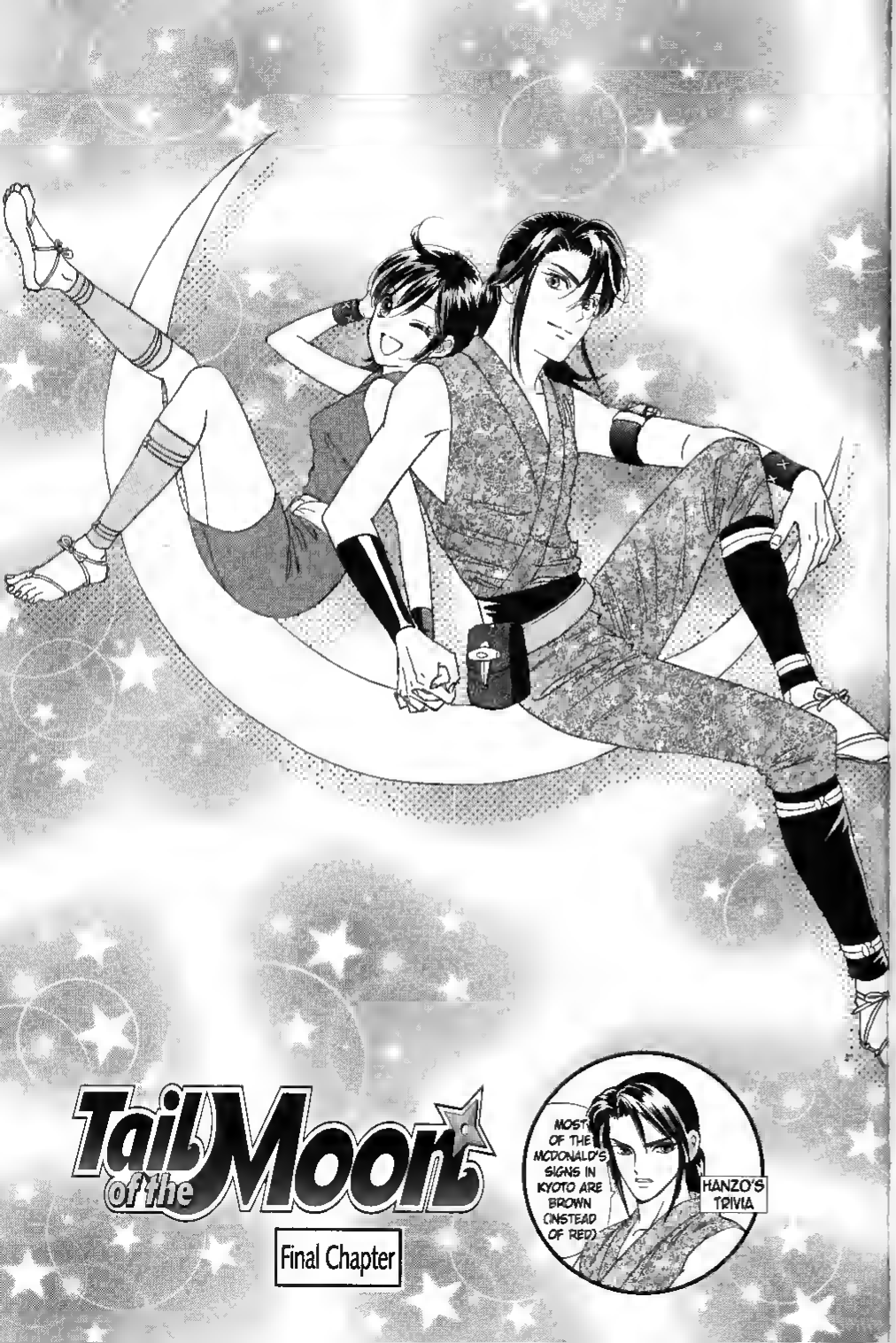
VISH VISH
VISH
VISH
MY LORD...
OH!

WHY, YOU...
GOEMON !!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO GOEMON ?!
I'LL HELP TOO...!
MAME-ZO?!
YURI!!
Er— I can see your—
OOF.

DASH
I'LL TAKE CARE OF THEM!!
VISH
VISH
VISH
...
URGH...
HURGH!
AAAGH!

...WE HAVEN'T HEARD FROM HER SINCE SHE LEFT FOR HONNOJI A FEW DAYS AGO.
OH NO...
USA...!!

WE CAME AS FAST AS WE COULD AFTER HEARING THAT NOBUNAGA WAS KILLED IN HONNOJI.
THANK YOU!
YOU SAVED MY LIFE.
LORD IEYASU...
ISN'T USA WITH YOU...?
THE THING IS...



Tail of the Moon

Final Chapter

LET'S GO!

LITTLE HANZO

IT SURE DID TAKE A LONG TIME FOR YOU TO TALK ABOUT IT ALL...
You sounded like an old man.
I WENT THROUGH A LOT AS A CHILD...
WHAT'S WITH ALL THE RACKET?
HM?
TMP TMP
HANZO ...!!
PLIP
I STARTED HAVING A NOSEBLEED WHEN I WAS THINKING ABOUT YOU...
...
Now, now...
WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO GET USED TO ME?
WHY DON'T YOU JUST TAKE CARE OF HER FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE?
OWW!

HIDEYOSHI'S ARMY...
MY LORD!
I BRING YOU NEWS!!
DMP DMP DMP
BUT IT'S STILL DANGEROUS OUT THERE...
...HAS HUNTED DOWN MITSUHIDE AKECHI!!
WHAT?!
YES.
THEY KILLED MITSUHIDE AT OGURISU...!!
IS THAT TRUE?!

HUFF HUFF
I...
I'M FINALLY BACK IN OKAZAKI...!!
OKAZAKI CASTLE
DASH
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
THIS IS ALL THANKS TO YOU IGA NINJA...
WE'RE GOING BACK TO LOOK FOR USAGI!!

MITSU-
HIDE...
WHAT A PITY TO LOSE A MAN OF HIS CALIBER...
WHAT ABOUT USA?!
SHE WAS PROBABLY WITH MITSUHIDE ...!

CALM DOWN, MAMEZO ...

I'LL NEVER LET YOU GO...

YES.
HELP ME
DID YOU GIRLS MAKE THAT TRAP...?
TMP TMP
OUKA, UMEKA, MOMOKA...
DON'T PICK ON MAMEZO!
FATHER...
IT'D BE A LOT MORE EFFECTIVE IF YOU PLACED BAMBOO SPEARS INSIDE THE HOLE...
NOOOOO
SO HOW IS USA DOING ...?
SHE BEGAN TO FEEL THE LABOR PAINS LAST NIGHT ...
WAARGH! WAARGH!
OH!

OWWW.
I'LL DELIVER THE FINAL BLOW...
SHUP
LET ME DO IT.
AAARGH
HAH.
WHOA.
VISH
VISH
TUP
YOU'LL NEVER GET ME WITH THOSE NINJA STARS...
IUFF
HEH HEH.
AGH!
WHUP

There, there.
IT'S TRADITIONAL TO NAME ALL THE HEIRS OF THE HATTORI FAMILY "HANZO."
WHAT ?!
It's going to be confusing if it's written the same way as your name...
WHAT ABOUT "HANZOU" ?
HIYA! ♪
I'VE COME TO CELE-BRATE...
IF I NAMED HIM THAT, HE MIGHT GROW UP TO BE AN IRRESPONSIBLE MAN...

HANZO...
IT'S...
...A BOY...
ZWAK
USAGI...
WAAROH WAAROH
WHAT'S HIS NAME GOING TO BE?
USA...
"HANZO."
YOU'VE DONE WELL...

MAMEZO HAS BEGUN TO DO FINE NINJA WORK THESE DAYS.
HA.
"SO, WE'RE ALL DOING FINE OVER HERE."
"I DON'T HAVE ANY WORRIES SINCE YUKI IS WITH YOU, BUT I'LL DEFINITELY RUSH OVER IF YOU EVER NEED ME."
THAT'S WHAT SHE WROTE...
...YUKI-MARU.

SO IT'S A BOY THIS TIME...
GIRLS.
DON'T LOOK AT HANZOU.
YES, FATHER.

HEY, HANZO...
ABOUT THAT OFFER OF LORD IEYASU EMPLOYING THE WHOLE FAMILY...
DIDN'T I TELL YOU THAT I'M DECLINING?

BUT IT'S NOT EASY FOR YOU, IS IT?
EVEN THOUGH THIS MEDICINE SHOP IS POPULAR FOR SELLING GOOD MEDICINE AT CHEAP PRICES...
WE RUN THE MEDICINE SHOP DURING THE DAY, BUT WE ALSO DO NINJA WORK AT NIGHT.
MEDICINE
STIMULANT・HEMOSTATIC・
OINTMENT・STOMACH MEDICINE・
SPLINTER EXTRACTION

I'M GOING TO HAVE TO WRITE HER A REPLY LETTER.
YOU DON'T ACTUALLY HAVE TO...
IT SAYS HERE THAT SHE'LL COME SEE US SOON WITH HER CHILDREN.
SHE SAYS SHE'S LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU TOO, TENKAI.
I TOO...
...WANT TO SEE USAGI...
SHE BROUGHT LIGHT BACK TO MY EYES AND WARMTH BACK TO MY HEART...
SHE SAVED MY LIFE...
USAGI IS A LIFESAVER FOR ME TOO!
SHE'S THE ONE WHO INTRODUCED A FINE PERSON LIKE YOU TO ME...
TENKAI...
LET US CREATE A WORLD OF PEACE TOGETHER ...!!

USAGI!
AARGH!
LEAP
HMPH.
WOOSH
AAAAH!
DASH
THE ENEMY !!
HEY...!
EEEEK
MA-MEZO!
LOOK AFTER THE GIRLS FOR ME!!
GOT IT...
USA...!

A FEW DAYS LATER IN IGA
SHOULDN'T WE HAVE MADE THE TRIP AFTER YOU FULLY RESTED UP?
HUFF.
HUFF.
HUFF.
USA, ARE YOU OKAY...?
ZUFF
HUH?
I'M SURE GRANDPA WILL BE FINE...
...BUT THE HERMIT AND GREAT-GRANDPA MAY DIE SOON, YOU KNOW...

YEEEAAARGH!
COME BACK HERE, GIRLS! IT'S DANGER-OUS...
DIE...!!
HOW DARE YOU DO THAT TO OUR MOTHER ?!
TAKE THIS!
THOK
THOK
WE'VE CAPTURED THE RUFFIAN.
KU...
HERMIT!
KU...!
TMPTMPTMPTMP
HRGH...
WHAT THE HECK ARE YOU?
YOU'RE WEIRD-LOOKING!

AAAGH
VIROUS
MY GREAT-GRANDCHILDREN...! ♡
SO YOU'VE FINALLY FULFILLED YOUR ASSIGNMENT.
"TO BEAR AND RAISE HATTORI HANZO'S CHILD."
I'M STILL WORKING ON IT THOUGH.

AAAGH
I'M SORRY, I'M SORRY !!
HOW CAN YOU BE SO MEAN TO THE HERMIT ?!
WHAT'S WRONG ?!
PHEW.
HGH...
HMPH...
I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHAT KIND OF PARENTS YOU HAVE.
GREAT-GRANDPA!
I'VE BROUGHT OUR CHILDREN WITH US ...!!
USAGI?!
THEN...
THESE CHILDREN ARE...

GRAND-PA...
THERE'S A PLACE I WANT TO DROP BY, SO PLEASE TAKE CARE OF MY CHILDREN FOR A BIT.
WE'LL BE HAVING A FEAST TONIGHT... ♪
AHH...
HANZO, COULD YOU COME WITH ME...?
ZUFF
ZUFF
WHERE ARE WE GOING?
TO A PLACE THAT'LL BRING BACK MEMORIES.

CHERISH IT.
IT'S AN ASSIGNMENT YOU'LL HAVE TO WORK ON FOR AS LONG AS YOU LIVE.

YOUR TREE... AND MY TREE...!!

IT'S WHERE YOUR HOUSE WAS, HANZO...
THIS IS...

ZUFF
WHAT DO YOU MEAN...?
WHAT?
WE DON'T KNOW THAT YET.
ZUFF
ZUFF
THERE'S ...
...NOTHING OF IT LEFT...
ZUFF
ZUFF
ZUFF
THERE IT IS!

I LOVE YOU...
MOTHER...!
TMP TMP TMP TMP TMP
I DON'T WANT TO HAVE A MONSTER FOR A RELATIVE...
WHO ARE YOU CALLING A MONSTER ...?
WAARGH
HEY...
WE WERE BUSY, YOU KNOW...
TUG
IT DOESN'T MATTER.

I'VE BEEN WANTING TO SEE THEM SO MUCH...!!
HANZO...

WE'LL ALWAYS BE TOGETHER.

THE END

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO DO THINGS LIKE THAT IN PRIVATE...
YOU SURE HAVE GROWN, USAGI.

BONUS STORY

MAMEZO'S NINJA DIARY

Promise of the Moon

Part 1

SPECIAL PROJECT PART 1

FROM UE-RIN TO ALL THE READERS

A MESSAGE OF GRATITUDE
TO THE READERS FROM UE-RIN!!

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR READING THIS SERIES!!

I WAS SO HAPPY TO BE ABLE TO DRAW USAGI AND HANZO'S CHILDREN...

I HAD A REALLY TOUGH TIME DRAWING THE ATTACK ON IGA, BUT I'M GLAD I WAS ABLE TO END THE STORY WITH A HAPPY ENDING.

I STARTED WRITING *TAIL OF THE MOON* WITH A LIGHTHEARTED FEELING AS A SEQUEL TO *TSUKI NO TOIKI, AI NO KIZU* (WHICH I CREATED FOR *THE MARGARET*). THANKS TO ALL OF YOUR SUPPORT, IT HAS BECOME MY LONGEST SERIES EVER.

I'M THINKING ABOUT CREATING AN EXTRA STORY FOR *TAIL OF THE MOON*, SO PLEASE CHECK IT OUT IF YOU SEE IT IN THE MAGAZINE!!

I'M A VERY HAPPY PERSON...!♡

I'LL BECOME YOUR WIFE WHEN I GROW UP.
I TREA-SURE ...
... THAT PROM-ISE.
IT'S BECAUSE OF THAT PROMISE THAT I...
INTRUDER ...!!
DASH
GET HIM ...!
DON'T LET HIM ESCAPE ...!!
TMP TMP TMP TMP
HM... WHAT TO DO?
..
ZA
THERE HE IS!!

KER SPLASH
I KNOW!
I'LL HAVE FISH FOR DINNER TODAY!

DMP DMP DMP
DIE!
WH...?

HAMAMATSU CASTLE TOWN
I'M HOME!
I GOT FISH FOR DINNER...
S'H'H'M
VISH
MOMOKA !!
UMEKA!
OUKA!
DIE, MAMEZO !!
AAAAGH!
VISH
VISH
VISH
STOP BEING MEAN TO MAMEZO!!
KELP PACIFIER
USA...
MY FOSTER MOM, A SKILLED HERBALIST
THE OTHER DAY THEY CUT YOUR HAIR WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING!!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT ?!
AHM...
IT'S ONLY A SCRATCH ...
I...I'M FINE...
HA HA
MAMEZO ISN'T YOUR TOY, YOU KNOW!!
...
MOTHER ...
WE'RE PRACTICING.

YOU HAVEN'T SEEN HER IN TEN YEARS ...?
IS A PROMISE LIKE THAT EVEN VALID AFTER SUCH A LONG TIME?
HUH?!
SHE'S A CUTE GIRL WITH A NOSE LIKE A PIGLET.
PIGLET ?!
I HAVEN'T SEEN HER FOR NEARLY TEN YEARS, SO I'M NOT SURE WHAT SHE'S LIKE NOW.
YOU'RE BACK, MAMEZO.
HANZO!!
MASTER HATTORI HANZO
USA'S HUSBAND, A HIGH-RANKING NINJA WHO'S ALSO MY SUPERVISOR
COME TO MY ROOM.
OKAY...

I WAS REALLY SURPRISED WHEN I WOKE UP...
IF SUCH A TRIVIAL MATTER SHOCKED YOU, YOU'RE NEVER GOING TO BE ABLE TO MARRY ME.
MARRY YOU?!
LOOK...
I'VE BEEN TOLD THAT THIS "HATSUNE" IS MY COUSIN...
...BUT WHAT KIND OF PERSON IS SHE?
"MAMEZO..."
HMPH
MAMEZO HAS A BRIDE-ELECT CALLED HATSUNE!!

YOUR NEXT ASSIGNMENT IS TO DELIVER HER SAFELY TO UEDA CASTLE.
IT HAS BEEN DECIDED THAT KOMATSU-HIME, TADAKATSU HONDA'S DAUGHTER, WILL MARRY INTO THE SANADA FAMILY.
A WEDDING ...
MARRY...
SLASH
ONCE YOU COMPLETE THIS ASSIGNMENT, I'LL LET YOU MARRY HATSUNE.

"I'LL BECOME YOUR WIFE WHEN I GROW UP."
THAT PROMISE...
I WONDER IF HATSUNE STILL REMEMBERS IT...
DAZED
SO...
...THAT'S YOUR ASSIGN-MENT...
MAMEZO...
ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?!
I'M SORRY!!
I...
...
I'LL SAY IT AGAIN.

TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
WAA
AARGH
MMGH...
ACK!
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
I'M...
...GOING TO MARRY HATSUNE...
I'M SORRY...
YOU WERE ABOUT TO CRUSH THE BABY!!
YOU FOOL !!
GYAH
GYAH

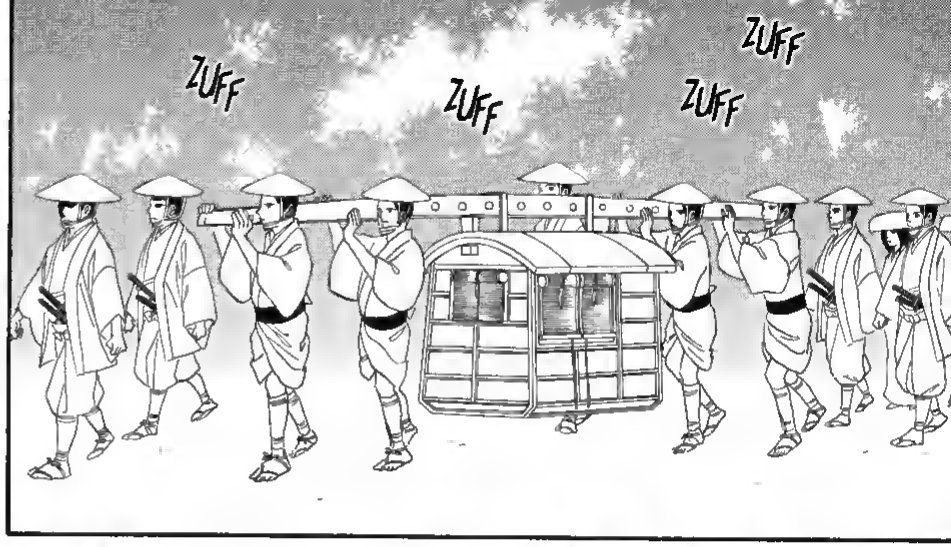
ISN'T THAT GREAT, MAMEZO ...?!
YOU TWO...
YEAH!!
ZWAK
HUH...
MARRY ?!
IT'S MY DREAM...
...TO BE IN A RELATIONSHIP LIKE YOURS!
HEY...
NNN...
SQUEEZE
CUNG
HANZO AND I ARE THE BEST COUPLE IN THE WORLD! ♡

I'M MAMEZO'S GUARDIAN.
AND WHO IS THIS GIRL?
OUKA ?!
USA AND THE OTHERS WILL BE WORRIED ABOUT YOU...!!
YOU SHOULDN'T BE FOLLOWING ME!
VIP
THIS IS WONDER-FUL!!
YOU'RE HANZO HATTORI'S DAUGH-TER?
I HAVE MY FATHER'S PERMISSION TO BE HERE.
She puted a body substitu-tion technique on me ?!
AGH!
OUKA'S GOING TO BE WITH ME...?!
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
YOU MUST BE A FINE KUNOICHI EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE STILL A CHILD.
Excellent, excellent!

TADAKATSU HONDA'S HOME
I'LL BE ACCOMPANYING YOU TO UEDA CASTLE.
MY NAME IS MAMEZO.
I HAD HEARD...
...THAT NINJA ARE SUSPICIOUS-LOOKING PEOPLE, BUT YOU DON'T LOOK...
VEEN
VEEN
SUSPICIOUS?
PRINCESS KOMATSU HAS NEVER SEEN A NINJA BEFORE.
HA HA
I SEE.
WE'RE BOTH INEXPERIENCED, BUT WE'LL DO OUR BEST.

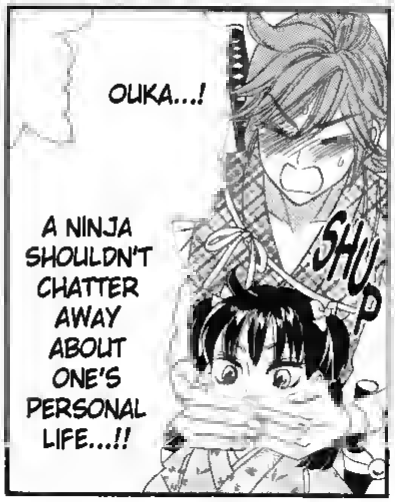
STAY HERE.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL THEM THAT!!
BUT AS YOUR GUARDIAN, I SHOULD TELL THE OTHERS THAT YOU'RE NOT SINGLE ANYMORE...

DISH
MAMEZO?
ZUFF ZUFF ZUFF


ZUFF
ZUFF
ZUFF
ZUFF

SO MAMEZO IS GETTING MARRIED AFTER THIS?
AH-HA
THAT'S WHY HE'S A LITTLE ABSENT-MINDED RIGHT NOW...

BUT...
ONCE THIS ASSIGNMENT IS OVER, I'M GOING TO MARRY HATSUNE...


OUKA...!
SHUP
A NINJA SHOULDN'T CHATTER AWAY ABOUT ONE'S PERSONAL LIFE...!!

MAMEZO ...
YOU'RE NOT FEELING WELL?
TMP
TMP
SHFF SHFF
I'M FINE...
I WAS EXPECTING THIS TO BE AN EASY ASSIGN-MENT...

NO, STAY BACK!!
I'M NOT AFRAID OF BANDITS LIKE THEM...
MAMEZO ...
I'LL BACK YOU UP!!
VISH
VISH
?!
A KID, HUH?
OOO!!
OUKA!!
...
SHOVE
I GUESS SHE'LL BE WORTH SOME DOUGH.
DAMMIT...
OUKA!

RUSTLE
EEEK
PROTECT THE PRINCESS !!
RAAGH
THERE'RE SO MANY OF THEM ...!!

OUKA!!
HUG
MAMEZO ...
AAAAH!
FWUMP
OOF
DASH
UGH...
I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE...
...BUT THANK YOU VERY MUCH...
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN ME?
HUH?
IT'S ME, WATARI.

SLISH
AAAGH!
WHO IS THAT...?

WHEN MY DAD DIED, I LEFT KOUGA. EVER SINCE THEN, I'VE BEEN LIVING A HAND-TO-MOUTH LIFE.
NAH...
I NEVER GOT THE CHANCE TO SEE YOU AFTER ALL THAT RACKET AT HONNOJI...
ARE YOU STILL LIVING IN KOUGA AS A NINJA?
WHOA...
SHE LOOKS SO MUCH LIKE MASTER HANZO.
SHE'S OUKA, HANZO AND USAGI'S DAUGHTER.
YOU'RE... ...ALONE NOW...?
WATARI'S FATHER...
I'M USED TO BEING ALONE.
YOU MIGHT BUMP INTO MORE BANDITS ON THE WAY.
LEMME HELP YOU.
UH-HUH...
ANYWAY, ARE YOU ESCORTING THIS PROCESSION RIGHT NOW, MAMEZO?

WA... ...TARI...?
IT REALLY HAS BEEN A LONG TIME...!!
YEAH, LONG TIME NO SEE, MAMEZO.
WHO IS THIS PERSON ?
THAT KID, IS SHE...?
A REALLY GOOD FRIEND OF MINE.
WATARI FROM KOUGA.

MONASTERY LODGINGS
USA'S GOING TO BE SO HAPPY WHEN SHE HEARS ABOUT WATARI!
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT.
Really, now
OUKA...

WATARI...

OKAY, OKAY...
I'LL GO BY MYSELF THEN...
No ninja stars, please.
SHA
YOU'RE INVITING AN UNMARRIED GIRL TO TAKE A BATH WITH YOU?!
GLARE
DO YOU WANT TO GO...?
OH, BY THE WAY, I HEARD THAT THERE'S A HOT SPRING NEARBY.

EEEEEEK
THAT CAME FROM THE PRINCESS'S ROOM.
HM.

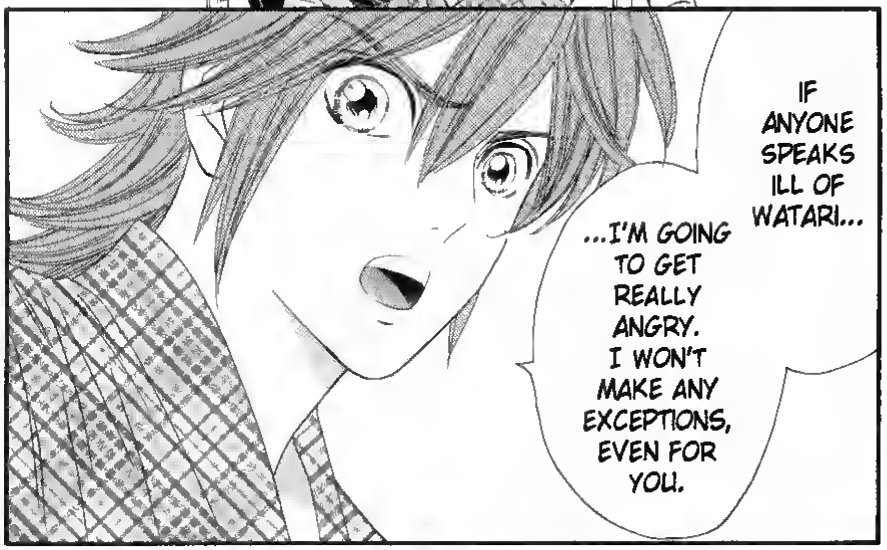
WATARI...
WE ONLY MAKE DEALS WITH HIGH-RANKING NINJA.
NO WAY.
WE'RE NOT ABOUT TO HIRE A SUSPICIOUS NINJA LIKE YOU!!
BUT WATARI IS A FRIEND OF MINE, AND...
VUP
TCH.
FORGET IT.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
WHO KNOWS?

USA RUNS A MEDICINE SHOP IN THE CASTLE TOWN OF HAMA-MATSU.
I'M SURE SHE'LL WELCOME YOU, WATARI...
THAT'S OKAY, BUT THANKS ALL THE SAME.
SEE YA.

PRIN-
CESS
...
IS SOMEONE TRYING TO KILL ME...?
YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT A THING.
I'LL PROTECT YOU WITH MY LIFE.
OOH...

TMP
TMP
WHAT'S THE MATTER ?!
W-WE FOUND A NEEDLE HIDDEN INSIDE PRINCESS KOMATSU'S KIMONO AND...
DID SHE PRICK HERSELF WITH IT?!
YES...
BUT LUCKILY, SHE SEEMS TO BE ALL RIGHT, SO...
IT MUST HAVE BEEN POISONED.
WHAT?!
YOU MUST TAKE AN ANTIDOTE RIGHT AWAY!!
A POISONED NEEDLE IN MY KIMONO...
PLEASE LOOK THROUGH ALL OF THE PRINCESS'S BELONGINGS!!
USA MADE THIS ANTIDOTE, SO IT'S SAFE!

BUT THE ONLY PERSON WHO COULD HAVE GOTTEN NEAR US DURING THAT TIME WAS...
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THAT WATARI HELPED US?!
OUKA!!

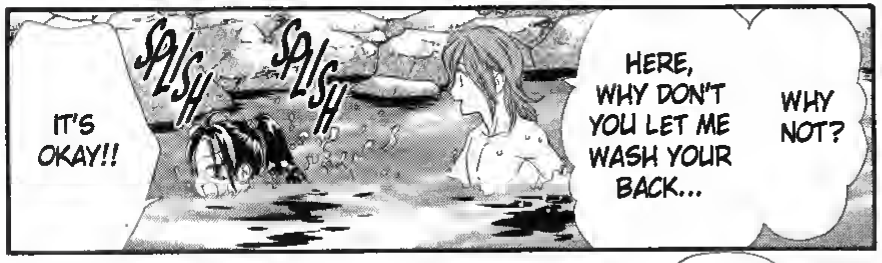

IF ANYONE SPEAKS ILL OF WATARI...
...I'M GOING TO GET REALLY ANGRY. I WON'T MAKE ANY EXCEPTIONS, EVEN FOR YOU.

...

THEN, ALONG THE WAY...?!
THAT'S POSSIBLE IF IT HAPPENED WHEN WE WERE ATTACKED BY THOSE BANDITS...
WE'VE FOUND MORE THAN THIRTY POISONED NEEDLES IN PRINCESS KOMATSU'S BELONGINGS!!
SO MANY...
ARE YOU TELLING ME THAT THESE NEEDLES GOT INSIDE BEFORE WE LEFT HAMAMATSU?!

WHAT ABOUT...
...THAT TRAVELLING NINJA...
...NAMED WATARI...?
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! WE CHECKED EVERYTHING NUMEROUS TIMES!!

SPLASH
SPLISH SPLISH
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SURPRISED ME.
AND DON'T COME NEAR HERE!!
WATARI...
YOU SURPRISED ME...


SPLISH SPLISH
IT'S OKAY!!
HERE, WHY DON'T YOU LET ME WASH YOUR BACK...
WHY NOT?

SPLASH
HEY, WAI—!
YUG
WHAT IS THERE TO BE EMBARRASSED ABOUT? WE'RE BOTH GUYS...
COME ON...

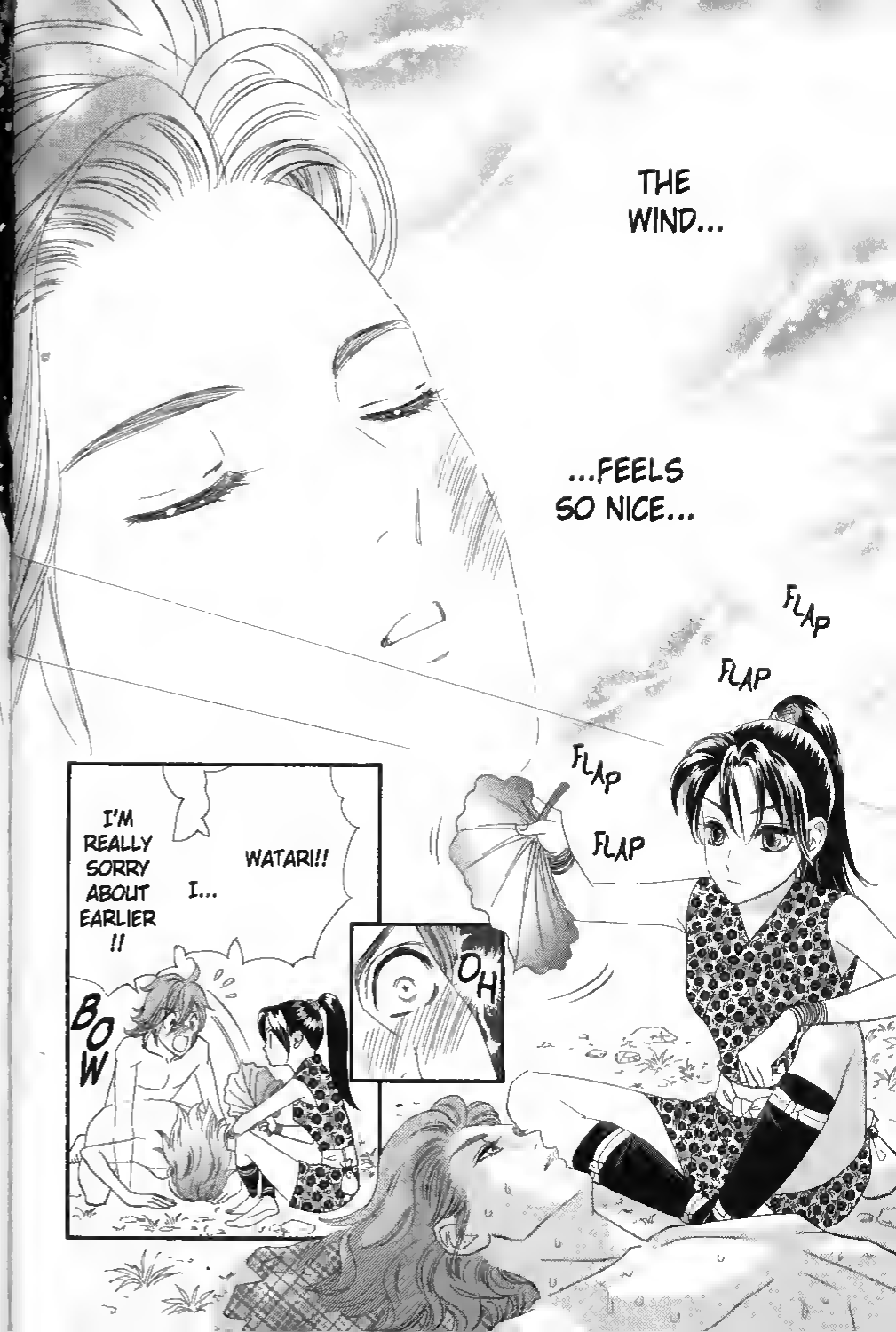
SOME-BODY'S HERE...
WHAT IF THEY WERE AFTER THE PRINCESS ...?
WHAT IF THOSE BANDITS WEREN'T AFTER MONEY AND VALUABLES?

WISH
A NINJA?!
OH...
IT'S YOU, MAMEZO.

W...
WATARI'S...
...A GIRL ...?!
SPLASH

HUH?
You're squishy...
WHY, YOU...!
HUH?
SMACK
YOU PERVERT !!
URGK.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
I'VE NEVER BEEN LOOKED UPON AS A GIRL ANYWAY.
I...
I ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT YOU WERE A BOY, SO...
SEE YA.
DON'T CATCH A COLD.
WAIT...
WATARI!!


THE WIND...
...FEELS SO NICE...
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
I'M REALLY SORRY ABOUT EARLIER !!
I...
WATARI!!
BOW
OH

IT'S SUCH A PAIN WALKING AROUND IN THESE GIRLY CLOTHES. IT'S TOO LONG...!
URGH, DAMMIT ...!
CUT IT OUT.
WATARI, YOU LOOK CUTE...
R... REALLY?
A GIRL SHOULD NOT TALK LIKE THAT.
!
MAYBE IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT TO LET THAT NINJA GUARD HER.
HM...
PRINCESS KOMATSU SEEMS TO LIKE HER.
CAN SOMEONE PASS ME MY COMB?
YOUR HAIR IS TANGLED UP TOO.
SPLENDID!
REALLY ?!
WATARI, YOU'VE BEEN HIRED!!
GRIN

SHFF
SHFF
MAMEZO...
...SO SHE CAN BE RIGHT BY THE PRINCESS'S SIDE TO PROTECT HER...
WATARI'S ACTUALLY A GIRL...
YOU'RE ASKING US TO HIRE THAT NINJA FROM YESTERDAY ?!
I'VE...
...NEVER WORN ANYTHING LIKE THIS BEFORE...
SO SHE REALLY IS A GIRL?!
THAT'S THE NINJA FROM YESTER-DAY?

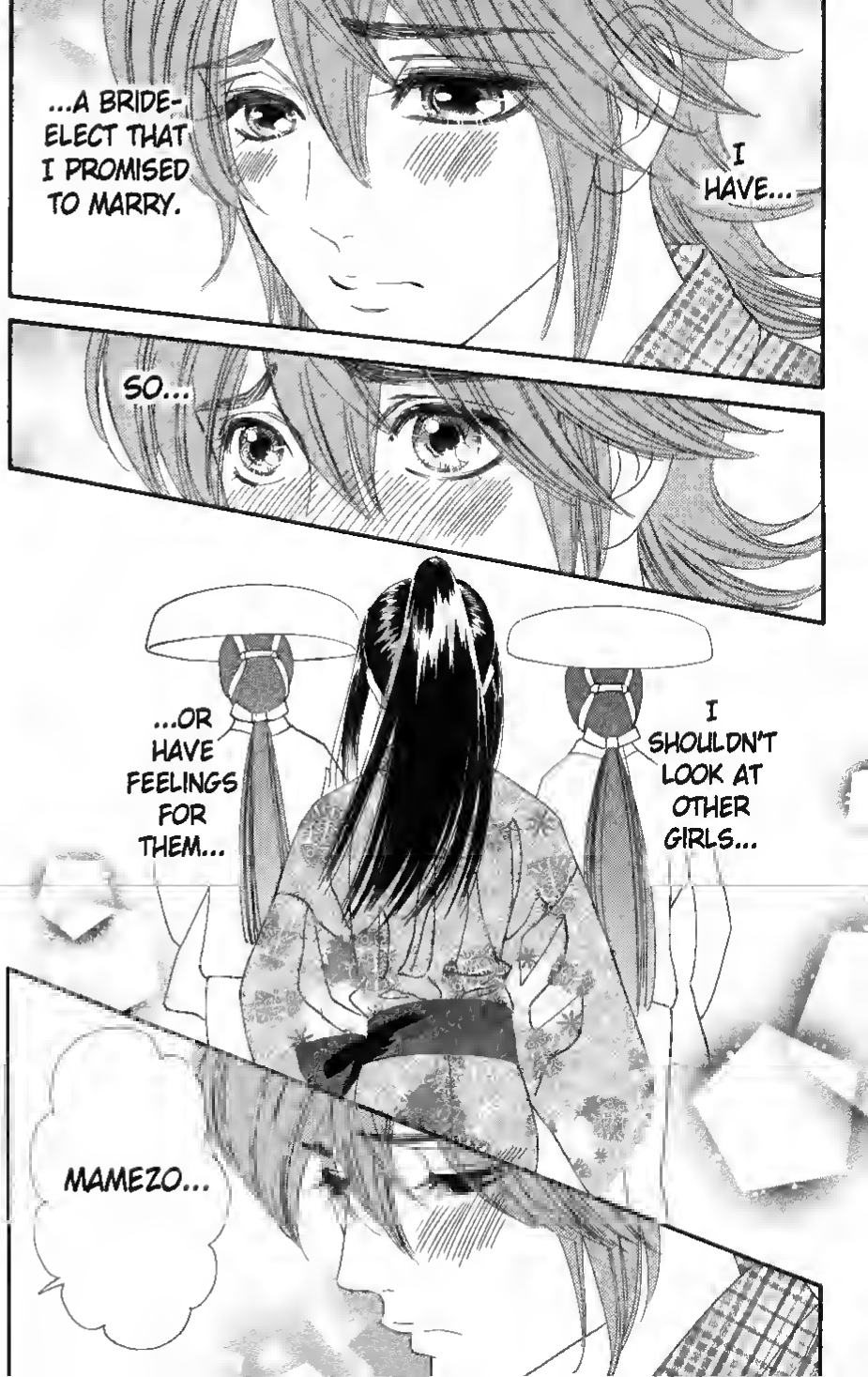
YOU TWO GET ALONG SO WELL.
YOU'LL MAKE A GREAT COUPLE.
OW.
THOK
YOU MORON!
DON'T SAY SOMETHING EMBARRASSING LIKE THAT !!
SHE REALLY IS CUTE...
CUT IT OUT.
STOP OGLING LIKE THAT, FOR GOD'S SAKE!
HUH?
OGLE?
YOU HAVE A BRIDE-ELECT, MAMEZO.

TH-THUMP
MAMEZ...
THANKS, MAMEZO!!
I'M REALLY THRILLED!!
B...
BLUSH
MAMEZO ...
HOW COME YOUR FACE IS RED?
BLUSH
...YOU'RE SO CUTE...
BE-CAUSE ...

Promise of the Moon
Part 2

ONCE I FINISH THIS ASSIGNMENT, I'LL BE MARRYING HATSUNE...
OH...
OKAY...
I MADE A PROMISE.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, MAMEZO?
WE'RE HEADING OUT.

Y...
YOU SURPRISED ME...
WHAT?
SH
TWITCH
WHUH!
YOU'RE STILL CARRYING THAT TAIL AROUND WITH YOU, HUH?
N...
NO, I'M NOT...
YOU'VE BEEN ACTING WEIRD, MAMEZO.
TH-THUMP
AH-HA, I KNOW WHAT IT IS...
YOU'VE FALLEN IN LOVE WITH ME, HAVEN'T YA?
HUH?
WHAT ?!


...A BRIDE-ELECT THAT I PROMISED TO MARRY.
I HAVE...
SO...
...OR HAVE FEELINGS FOR THEM...
I SHOULDN'T LOOK AT OTHER GIRLS...
MAMEZO...

I'M JUST GLAD THERE'S A GIRL OUT THERE WHO'D ACTUALLY LIKE A SPACEY GUY LIKE YOU!!
SMACK
OW!
WHAT...?
ONCE THIS ASSIGNMENT IS OVER, MAMEZO IS GOING TO MARRY THAT GIRL.
STOP IT...
WELL, GOOD FOR YOU THEN.
A spacey guy ?
HUMPH!
PRINCESS KOMATSU!!
PRINCESS KOMATSU, WHAT'S THE MATTER?!
PLEASE STOP THE PALANQUIN !!
PRINCESS!!

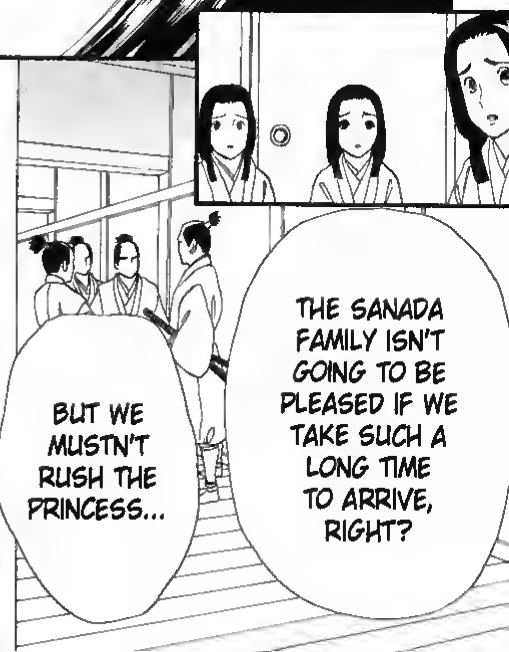
HAH?!
WATARI...
PLEASE STOP FLIRTING WITH MAMEZO LIKE THAT.
I WAS JUST KIDDING, YOU IDIOT!!
I...
MAMEZO HAS A BRIDE-ELECT.
OUKA...!

NO...!!
HUH?
WATARI'S RIGHT BEHIND ME...
WHAT IS IT?
DASH
OUKA ?!
PRINCESS KOMATSU, PLEASE EXCUSE ME!!
TMP
TMP
YOU MUST BE QUIET...
THIS IS AN EMERGENCY!
ZWAK
HEY...

THE POISON NEEDLE INCIDENT FROM LAST NIGHT GOT TO HER...
I HOPE SHE FEELS BETTER QUICKLY...

...LEAVE ME ALONE FOR NOW...
PLEASE...

MAMEZO ...
WHERE DID THAT KOUGA KUNOICHI GO?
IT MUST BE HARD FOR ALL OF THEM ...


BUT WE MUSTN'T RUSH THE PRINCESS...
THE SANADA FAMILY ISN'T GOING TO BE PLEASED IF WE TAKE SUCH A LONG TIME TO ARRIVE, RIGHT?

OH...
YES, THAT'S RIGHT...
IS SHE A PERSON YOU HAVE FALLEN IN LOVE WITH...?
I WAS TOLD THAT YOU ARE GOING TO GET MARRIED SOON TOO...
MA-MEZO ...
...IS SCARED ABOUT MARRYING A MAN SHE HAS NEVER MET BEFORE...
THE PRINCESS ...
NO!!
HUH?
IT'S THE SAME AS ME THEN...
WHY DID I JUST SAY THAT SO STRONGLY?
SIGH...
...KIND OF THING IS LOVE ANYWAY...?
WHAT...

WHAT THE...?
WATARI...
BUT WE NEVER EVEN LET ANYONE IN...
IT'S EASY FOR A NINJA TO SNEAK IN HERE.
JUST TALKING?
I WAS JUST TALKING WITH HER, THAT'S ALL.
WATARI, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE...?
PLEASE EXCUSE US.
SHA
NOD
IT'S TRUE...

AND YOU FEEL YOUR HEART THROBBING OR FEEL IRRITATED...
...AT EVERY WORD YOU HEAR FROM THAT PERSON.
AND EVEN THOUGH YOU'VE JUST PARTED...
...YOU WANT TO SEE THAT PERSON AGAIN...

I'VE NEVER FALLEN IN LOVE BEFORE!!
FEH.
LOVE ...?
LOVE ...
It's what made Usa keep chasing after Hanzo.
OH
HOW WOULD I KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT?
WH... WHAT DO YOU THINK, WATARI?
L- LOVE ...?!
NOPE! SORRY.
YOU DON'T ?
YOU UNWITTINGLY KEEP FOLLOWING THAT PERSON WITH YOUR EYES...
...AND HAPPY...
OUKA...
...YOU FEEL PLEASED...
AND WHEN YOU'RE WITH THAT PERSON...

ODDBALL.
I'M IN LOVE WITH WATARI ...
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
I'M JUST GENERALIZING.
HEY, YOU KNOW A LOT ABOUT LOVE FOR A KID.
PRIN-CESS ...
THIS MARRIAGE WAS ARRANGED TO STRENGTHEN THE BONDS BETWEEN OUR TWO FAMILIES...
THAT SOUNDS SO EXCITING...
AS IF YOUR WORLD REVOLVES AROUND THE PERSON YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH...
...I GUESS.
A FEELING AS IF YOUR WHOLE WORLD REVOLVES AROUND THAT PERSON...
I...
NOTHING.
WHAT IS IT, MAMEZO?
OH...

OUKA, I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU HAVE TO SAY SOMETHING LIKE THAT IF YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT LOVE IS...
ARRANGED MARRIAGES ARE AN IMPORTANT DUTY FOR THE DAUGHTER OF A SAMURAI FAMILY.
THE PRINCESS SEEMED SAD...
BATH-ROOM.
BY THE WAY, WHERE'S WATARI?
OH, OKAY...
TMP
TMP
TMP
GO LOOK FOR PRINCESS KOMATSU!!
ZWAK
YOU TWO!

SOME-THING YOU CANNOT RUN AWAY FROM...
IT IS SOME-THING I CANNOT RUN AWAY FROM ...
...READY TO FACE THAT FATE QUITE YET.
BUT I'M JUST NOT...
PRINCESS...

!!
I...
YOU WANT TO BE FREE, DON'T YOU?
AAH...
A DEAD END...
I'LL HELP YOU BE FREE THEN.
WATARI!!
STAY BACK !!
TCH.
WHERE ARE YOU TAKING THE PRINCESS?

TMP
TMP
TMP
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR PRINCESS KOMATSU TO HAVE CLIMBED OUT OF THE WINDOW ALONE.
WHAT?
WE'VE BEEN HAD!!
PLEASE LET GO OF ME...
HUFF.
HUFF.

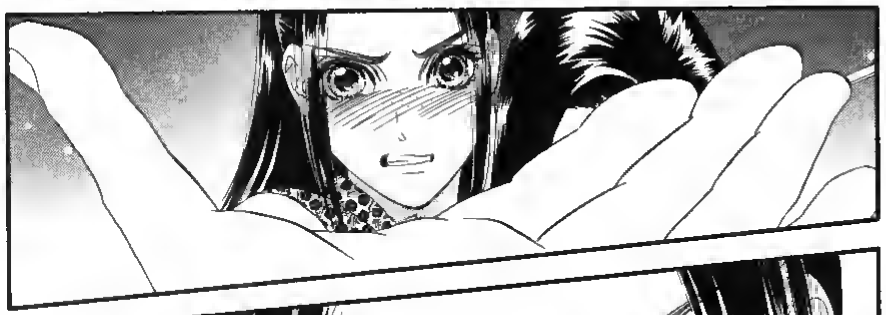
WHO SENT YOU?
I DUNNO.
ALL I KNOW IS THAT I GET PAID IF I GET RID OF THIS PRINCESS.
PRINCESS KOMATSU !!
SORRY, PRINCESS.
AAAH...
I BROUGHT YOU OUT HERE 'CAUSE I DIDN'T WANT TO KILL YOU, BUT...

KYAAH!
YOU COME ANY CLOSER AND THE PRINCESS IS DEAD!!
WATARI!!
THAT'S RIGHT!
...THE ENEMY !!
WATARI'S
THOSE POISONOUS NEEDLES LAST NIGHT...
IT WAS YOU, WASN'T IT?

YOU'RE GONNA GET MARRIED AFTER THIS ASSIGNMENT, RIGHT?
ZUFF
ZUFF
ZUFF
ZUFF
OH, I GET IT!
SO IF THE PRINCESS DIES, YOU'RE DONE FOR!!
I'M NOT GOING TO GET MARRIED.
MAMEZO ...

YOU...
WATARI ISN'T THE KIND OF GIRL WHO CAN DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
ZUFF
ZUFF
ZUFF
STAY BACK, I SAID!!
I BELIEVE IN YOU, WATARI.
WHA...

WATARI...
YOU'LL NEVER BE ALONE AGAIN.
LET'S BE TOGETHER.



I DON'T BELIEVE YOU!!
YOU STUPID ...
SLIP

I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU, WATARI...
...SO I'M NOT GOING TO GET MARRIED!!

FWAAA
MAMEZO !!
WATARI !!

PRINCESS KOMATSU!!
AAAAAH!
WATARI !!
Prin-cess !!
OWW ...
FWUP
KYAH!
TUG

MAMEZO!
MAMEZO!
MAMEZO ...!!
SHAAAA
KRAK
SNAP
THUD

I'LL PROTECT YOU WITH MY LIFE...!!
I'LL PROTECT YOU.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO ENDURE EVERY-THING BY YOURSELF ANYMORE.

LET'S...
...BE TO-GETHER...
DON'T SAY SOME-THING...
...SO NICE...
YOU IDIOT...

MAMEZO !!
SHUP
SLAP
HANG IN THERE!!
MAMEZO ...
DON'T YOU DIE ON ME!!
SLAP
SLAP
MAMEZO ...!
SLAP
MAMEZO !!
OUCH...

YOU NEVER KNOW, I MIGHT BE ABLE TO FALL IN LOVE WITH THE MAN I'M SUPPOSED TO MARRY, RIGHT?
WELCOME TO UEDA CASTLE.
I'M NOBUYUKI SANADA.
TH-THUMP
N...
NICE TO MEET YOU.

...PRETTY MUCH STARTED BECAUSE I KEPT SAYING I WANTED TO RUN AWAY FROM THIS MARRIAGE...
THIS WHOLE INCIDENT...
...SO THAT THE SANADA FAMILY WILL NOT HEAR ABOUT IT.
I'VE ASKED EVERYONE TO KEEP ALL OF THIS A SECRET...
ARE YOU GOING TO UEDA CASTLE THEN?
PRIN-CESS...
...FOR YOUR COMPASSION, PRINCESS KOMATSU.
I'VE GOT NOTHING BUT GRATI-TUDE...
I'M NOT GOING TO RUN AWAY ANYMORE.

TUG
WHOA.
IS THIS YOUR TAIL?
B-BUMP B-BUMP B-BUMP
HATSUNE!
HOW COME YOU HAVEN'T GROWN UP?!
WHY, IT'S MAMEZO...
?

WHAT'S THE MATTER?
YOU DON'T SEEM HAPPY.
SHFF SHFF
UH-HUH...
LOOKS LIKE THE PRINCESS LIKED THAT GUY AFTER ALL.
SHFF SHFF
WHY, YOU ...!
CANCELLING THE MARRIAGE WITH HER IS THE SAME AS BETRAYING MY FATHER HIMSELF.
HATSUNE IS MY FATHER'S NIECE...
SHIVER SHIVER
HMPH.
SHFF SHFF
WATARI... ♡
DON'T SAY MY NAME LIKE THAT! YOU'RE GIVING ME THE CREEPS!!
I'M HERE TO SUPPORT YOU, RE-MEMBER ?!
PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER, MAMEZO.

WAIT...
IS THAT WATARI?!
WHAT...?
HIYA, HERBALIST.
I'VE DECIDED TO START GOING OUT WITH MAMEZO!!
IT REALLY IS A PITY, ISN'T IT...
MAMEZO...
WHAAAAAT...?!

MOMMY ?!
THIS IS HARUNE. ♪
I WANT THAT TAIL...
HATSU ...?
MOMMY...
TUMP
TUMP
YOU LOOK GREAT!
DO YOU REMEMBER ME?

I'M SORRY, MAMEZO.
HATSUNE, YOU'RE ...?!
HA...
...BUT I'M ALREADY MARRIED.
I NEVER KNEW THAT I WAS YOUR BRIDE-ELECT, SO...
UNCLE HANZO ASKED ME TO COME AND MARRY YOU...
IT TURNS OUT HATSUNE ...

YOU GUYS ARE STILL AS NOISY AS EVER, AREN'T YOU.
GOEMON!!
MAMEZO!
Why are you injured like this?
YOU'VE GROWN SO MUCH...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
OWW.....
THEY MUST ALL LOOK AS CUTE AS USAGI... ♡
WHAAAAAT...?!
Come over here. ♡
WHAT AM I DOING HERE?
BECAUSE YOU WOULDN'T MARRY ME...
...I CAME TO TAKE ONE OF YOUR DAUGHTERS AS MY WIFE!!

MAMEZO...
DON'T BE SO IMPULSIVE!!
LOOK, I KNOW YOU'RE A GREAT GUY, WATARI, BUT I REALLY THINK IT'S GOING TO BRING ABOUT PROBLEMS FOR TWO MEN TO HAVE A RELATION-SHIP!!

NO WAY...
WHAT?!
...
I'M A GIRL!!

SNIFF...

OUKA?
WAAAH!
TMP
TMP
WAARGH
WHAT'S WRONG? IT'S NOT LIKE YOU TO CRY LIKE THIS.

WATARI...
WILL YOU MARRY ME?
HUH?
THEY'RE...
...GOING TO BE YOUR FAMILY TOO, WATARI.

HMPH.
UH...

YOU CAN'T HAVE THEM, GOEMON !!
WHY, YOU...!
HOW DARE YOU...?!
WHY DO THEY ALL LOOK LIKE HANZO?!

GOEMON'S, OF COURSE! WHOSE ELSE COULD IT BE...?!
YURI? WHOSE CHILD IS IT?!
THIS REALLY IS ONE NOISY FAMILY.
JUST BECAUSE I'VE GOTTEN PREGNANT...
ARGH
GOEMON, YOU TWO-TIMER...
I WAS JUST KIDDING...

SPECIAL PROJECT PART 2

UE-RIN'S FAVORITE SCENES

UE-RIN HAS CHOSEN HER TOP THREE SCENES OUT OF ALL 15 VOLUMES AND HAS AOOEO HER THOUGHTS ABOUT THEM!!

FAVORITE SCENE 1 USAGI GAINS WEIGHT

(From Volume 4, Chapter 28)

I HAD GAINED A LOT OF WEIGHT WHEN I WAS DOING THIS SCENE, SO I FELT VERY SYMPATHETIC TO USAGI.

FAVORITE SCENE 2 POOR KAME

(From Volume 10, Chapter 65)

"IT WILL HELP YOU RUN AWAY QUICKLY FROM ANY DANGER YOU MIGHT ENCOUNTER."
YOU'VE...
HAD IT WITH YOU ALL THIS TIME?
THIS LUCKY RABBIT'S FOOT
YOU HAVE ME.

IT WAS AS IF USAGI WAS THE LIGHT AND KAME WAS THE DARK. I KEPT WEEPING, THINKING, "I FEEL SO SORRY FOR YOU, KAME." WHILE I DREW THIS SCENE.

FAVORITE SCENE 3 SCARY RANMARU

(From Volume 13, Chapter 90)

I HAD A TOUGH TIME TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT KIND OF CHARACTER RANMARU WAS. THIS WAS WHEN I WAS ABLE TO GET A CLEAR GRASP OF HIS CHARACTER.

Page 151, panel 1: **Ueda Castle**
Located in Nagano, Ueda Castle was built by daimyo Masayuki Sanada during the latter half of the 16th century and was the original home of the Sanada clan.

Page 155, panel 5: **Kunoichi**
A term often used for female ninja. The word is spelled くノ一, and when combined, the letters form the kanji for woman, 女。

Page 211, panel 2: **Nobuyuki Sanada**
Nobuyuki Sanada (1566-1658) was the son of Masayuki Sanada. Tokugawa Ieyasu arranged to have him marry Komatsu-hime, his adopted daughter.

Page 40, panel 2: **Ranmaru Mori**
Ranmaru Mori is one of Oda Nobunaga's most famous vassals. He became Nobunaga's attendant at a young age and was recognized for his talent and loyalty.

Page 82, panel 3: **Hagemu and Hageru**
The words *hagemu* (strive hard) and *hageru* (go bald) are used in the original Japanese text to make a pun.

Page 85, panel 2: **Oda Nobutada**
Oda Nobutada (1557-1582) was the eldest son of Oda Nobunaga. He commanded armies under his father against the Takeda clan.

Page 102, panel 2: **Okazaki**
Okazaki is in Aichi Prefecture on the main island of Honshu, about 22 miles from Nagoya.

Page 124, panel 3: **Tenkai**
A Japanese Buddhist priest who worked for Tokugawa Ieyasu and advised the next two Tokugawa shoguns. Some people believe that he was actually Mitsuhide Akechi, but recent studies have found that he could have been somebody close to Mitsuhide (such as a cousin).

The ways of the ninja are mysterious indeed, so here is a glossary of terms to help you navigate the intricacies of their world.

Page 2: **Oda Nobunaga**
Oda Nobunaga lived from 1534 to 1582, and came close to unifying Japan. He is probably one of the most famous Japanese warlords. He was the first warlord to successfully incorporate the gun in battle, and is notorious for his ruthlessness.

Page 2: **Mitsuhide Akechi**
Mitsuhide Akechi became one of Oda Nobunaga's retainers after Nobunaga's conquest of Mino province (now Gifu prefecture) in 1566. He is known to have been more of an intellectual and a pacifist than a warrior.

Page 7, panel 2: **Sakamoto Castle**
Located in Sakamoto, a small village in Shiga prefecture (once known as Omi province). In 1571, Mitsuhide Akechi was awarded the Sakamoto estate for serving Oda Nobunaga.

Page 17, panel 3: **Sakai**
Sakai is a city in Osaka prefecture that is one of the largest and most important seaports in Japan. Once known for samurai swords, Sakai is now famous for quality kitchen knives and other cutlery.

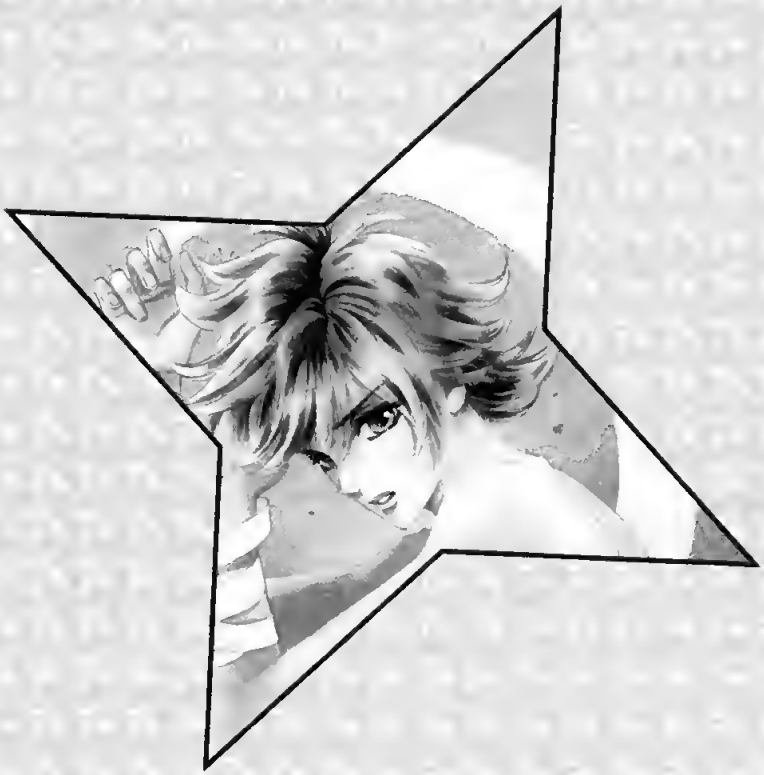
Page 19, panel 1: **Honnoji**
Honnoji is a temple in Kyoto. Oda Nobunaga often stayed here when he traveled to the capital.

Page 2: **Tokugawa Ieyasu**
Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543-1616) was the first Shogun of the Tokugawa Shogunate. He made a small fishing village named Edo the center of his activities. Edo thrived and became a huge town, and was later renamed Tokyo, the present capital.

Page 2: **Okazaki Castle**
Okazaki Castle is in the city of Okazaki in Aichi prefecture. This castle was home to various leaders throughout history, including Tokugawa Ieyasu. Though demolished in 1873, the castle was reconstructed in 1959.

Page 2: **Iga**
Iga is a region on the island of Honshu and also the name of the famous ninja clan that originated there. Another area famous for its ninja is Kouga, in the Shiga prefecture on Honshu. Many books claim that these two ninja clans were mortal enemies, but in reality inter-ninja relations were not as bad as stories might suggest.

Page 2: **Azuchi Castle**
Azuchi Castle was one of Oda Nobunaga's main castles. It is located on the shores of Lake Biwa in Shiga Prefecture. The castle's strategic location enabled Nobunaga to manage his foes more easily, namely the Uesugi clan to the north and the Mouri clan to the west.



I've been creating this series with much doubt and worry. The turnabouts in the story, when the main characters made a move and all that... I still don't know if the choices I made were right, but I'm glad to have been able to end the series with a happy, cheerful scene. I'm also glad I was able to draw the after-stories about Mamezo and the other characters.

–Rinko Ueda

Rinko Ueda is from Nara prefecture. She enjoys listening to the radio, drama CDs, and Rakugo comedy performances. Her works include *Ryo*, a series based on the legend of Gojo Bridge; *Home*, a story about love crossing national boundaries; and *Tail of the Moon (Tsuki no Shippo)*, a romantic ninja comedy.